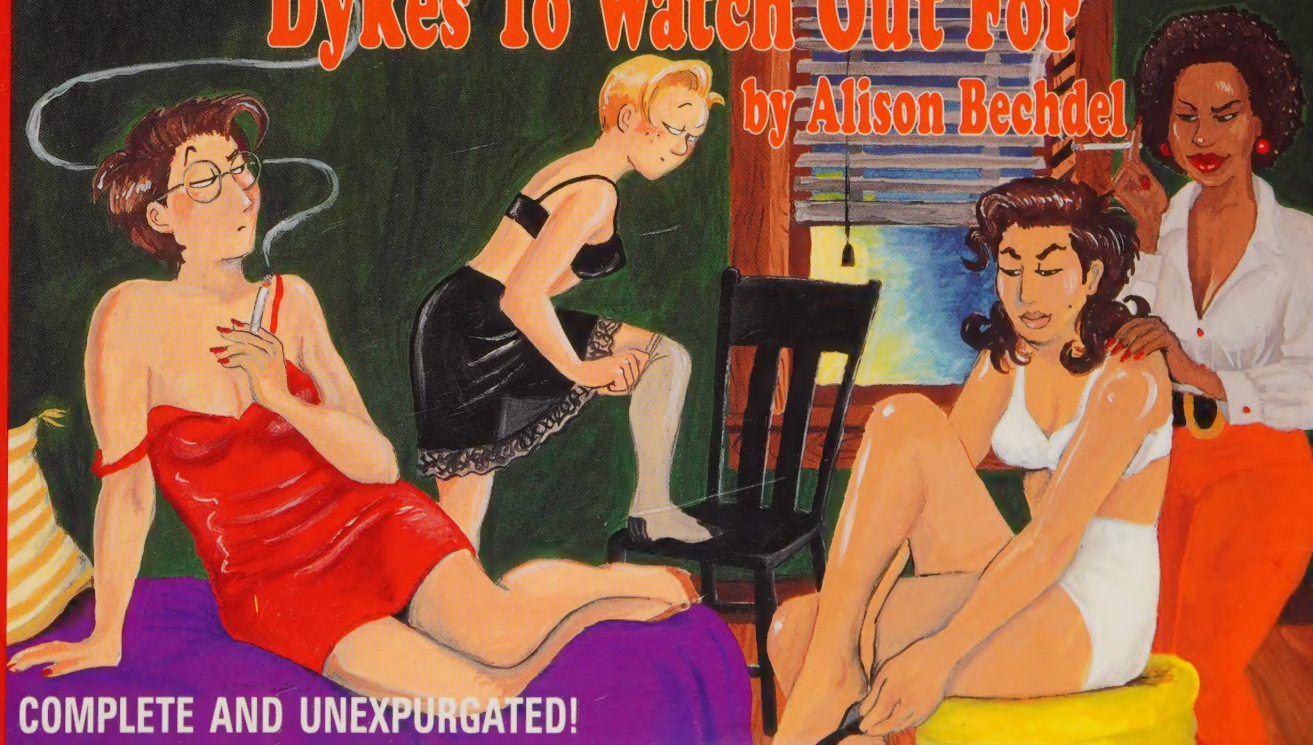


A candid  
look at the  
tormented  
urgings and  
forbidden  
passions of  
women who  
have strayed  
far beyond  
the bounds  
of decent  
society.  
Enter the  
twisted,  
twilight  
world of...


# Unnatural

## Dykes To Watch Out For

by Alison Bechdel



COMPLETE AND UNEXPURGATED!



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2022 with funding from  
Kahle/Austin Foundation

<https://archive.org/details/unnaturaldykesto0000bech>

# Unnatural

## Dykes To Watch Out For

## Other books by the author:

*Spawn Of Dykes To Watch Out For*  
*Dykes To Watch Out For: The Sequel*  
*New, Improved! Dykes To Watch Out For*  
*More Dykes To Watch Out For*  
*Dykes To Watch Out For*



# Unnatural

Dykes To Watch Out For

by Alison Bechdel



Firebrand  
Books

Ithaca, New York

Alison Bechdel's cartoons appear regularly in more than fifty publications in the United States and Canada.

Copyright © 1995 by Alison Bechdel  
All rights reserved.

This book may not be reproduced in whole or in part, except in the case of reviews, without permission from Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, New York 14850.

Book and cover design by Alison Bechdel and Debra Engstrom

Printed on acid-free paper in the United States by McNaughton & Gunn

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Bechdel, Alison

Unnatural dykes to watch out for / by Alison Bechdel.

p. cm.

ISBN 1-56341-068-0. — ISBN 1-56341-067-2 (pbk.)

1. Lesbianism—United States—Caricatures and cartoons.

2. Lesbians—United States—Caricatures and cartoons. 3. American wit and humor, Pictorial. I. Title.

HQ75.6.U6B426 1995

306.76'63'0207—dc20

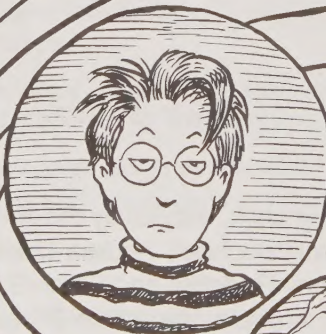
95-36092

CIP

**for Amy Rubin, of course**

Thanks to the many, many people who have helped me in my work, especially the Amazon Bookstore women, Carrie Barnett and People Like Us, Helen Bechdel, Andrea Doremus, Judith Katz, Peggy Luhrs, Rachel Lurie, Patti McManamy, Amey Radcliffe and Steph Salmon at Gotham City Graphics, Alissa Oppenheimer, Sarah Van Arsdale, Jane Van Buren, the Lesbian Herstory Archives—in particular Amy Beth and Nancy Froehlich—and, as ever, Nancy Bereano. Extra special tips o' the nib to JEB (Joan E. Biren) and Kathryn Kirk, for lending me their photos of the 1981 Women's Pentagon Action.

# The Mo-centric Universe



**Mo**  
OUR HAPLESS  
HEROINE. BOOKSTORE  
CLERK BY DAY,  
CELIBATE BY NIGHT.



**Thea**  
MO'S CO-WORKER  
AND CRUSH OBJECT.



**Jezanna**  
THE TYPE-A  
BOSS OF  
MADWIMMIN  
BOOKS.



**Lois**  
MO'S CO-WORKER AND  
CONFIDANTE, HOUSEMATE  
OF GINGER AND SPARROW,  
CONSUMMATE LOTHARIO.



**Ginger**  
HOUSEMATE OF LOIS AND  
SPARROW, TEACHER,  
DOCTORAL CANDIDATE,  
AND PROCRUSTINATRIX  
EXTRAORDINAIRE.



**Sparrow**  
HOUSEMATE OF LOIS  
AND GINGER,  
BATTERED WOMEN'S SHELTER  
WORKER, INNER-GROWTH ADDICT.





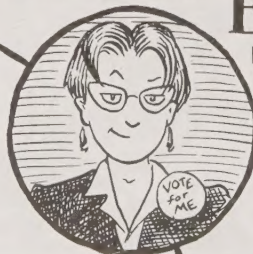
## Clarice

MO'S FIRST EX-LOVER,  
WORKAHOLIC ATTORNEY  
FOR THE ENVIRON-  
MENTAL JUSTICE  
FUND, TONI'S LOVER,  
AND RAFAEL'S MOTHER.



## Harriet

MO'S MOST RECENT EX. A  
BUREAUCRAT FOR THE STATE, BUT  
A NICE PERSON NONETHELESS.



## Ellen

HARRIET'S CURRENT S.O.,  
TIRELESS COMMUNITY  
LEADER, ACCOMPLISHED  
ATHLETE, AND ALL-  
AROUND OVERACHIEVER.



## Rafael

TONI AND CLARICE'S  
AS-YET-UNSCATHED  
MAN-CHILD.



## Toni

EMINENTLY CAPABLE  
MOTHER OF RAFAEL,  
INCREASINGLY DISCONTENTED  
PARTNER OF CLARICE,  
AND ERSTWHILE C.P.A.



## June

SPARROW'S NEW AND  
NEWLY SOBER PARAMOUR.



## Malika

GINGER'S LONG-  
SUFFERING, LONG-  
DISTANCE LOVE.

# INFANT REPLAY

©1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

MALIKA, I'M GONNA  
**SMASH** THAT FUCK-  
ING CAMCORDER!

SHE'S GETTING  
REALLY CLOSE  
NOW!

YEAH, THIS IS  
RIGHT BEFORE THE  
BABY CROWNS.

FONY

171

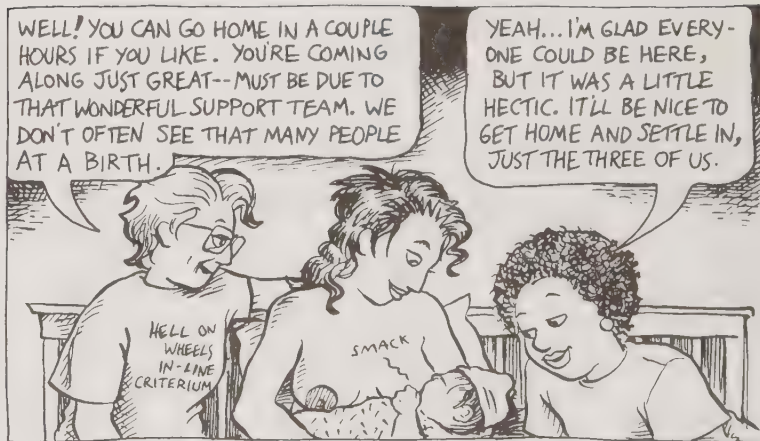
THERE'S THE  
HEAD! JEEZ,  
IT'S ALMOST  
AS INTENSE  
ON TV AS IN  
REAL LIFE!

LOOK HOW BEAUTIFUL TONI IS,  
POISED ON THE BRINK OF THIS  
MIRACULOUS RITE OF PASSAGE!

UNNGH!







# revelations

© 1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

ONE RAINY MORNING AT MADWIMMIN BOOKS...

THEA, YOU SHOULDN'T DRINK COFFEE WHILE YOU'RE ON THE COMPUTER. WHAT IF IT SPILLS?

RELAX, MO. I'M VERY CAREFUL.

172

SHEESH! WHAT'S UP HER BUTT? SHE'S BEEN ACTING REALLY WEIRD TOWARD ME LATELY.

OKAY, YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW. THE OTHER DAY, SHE OVERHEARD YOU TELLING ME HOW PUPPYLIKE YOU FIND HER CRUSH ON YOU.

SHIT! SHE MUST FEEL AWFUL! I'D BETTER TALK TO HER.

OFFICE

OH, JEEZ. I HATE LESBIAN HONESTY. LOOK, JUST DON'T TELL HER I TOLD YOU SHE HEARD WHAT YOU TOLD ME.

CLARICE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE WITH A TWO-DAY-OLD KID AT HOME? STIR-CRAZY ALREADY?

I NEED SOME BOOKS ABOUT BABIES, FAST.

WHAT'S WRONG, CLARICE?



I DON'T KNOW! HE'S CRYING A LOT AND NOT NURSING. TONI'S NO HELP AT ALL - SHE KEEPS TELLING ME IT'S **NORMAL**. GOD, I SHOULD HAVE DONE MORE RESEARCH ON THIS!



AND AS IF I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH, HOW 'BOUT THAT JUDGE IN VIRGINIA?! HE SAYS A WOMAN IS UNFIT TO RAISE HER SON BECAUSE SHE'S A LESBIAN, THEN GIVES CUSTODY TO THE GRANDMOTHER!



WHAT IF **TONI'S** HOMOPHOBIC PARENTS TRIED SOMETHING LIKE THAT! D'YOU REALIZE HOW VULNERABLE WE ALL ARE TO THE LEGAL DECISIONS OF STUNTED, HATEFUL, PALEOZOIC **DICKHEADS** LIKE THIS GUY?!



YEAH, IT'S REALLY BAD NEWS. BUT WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU GOT ANY SLEEP?

SLEEP? LIKE, LYING DOWN?



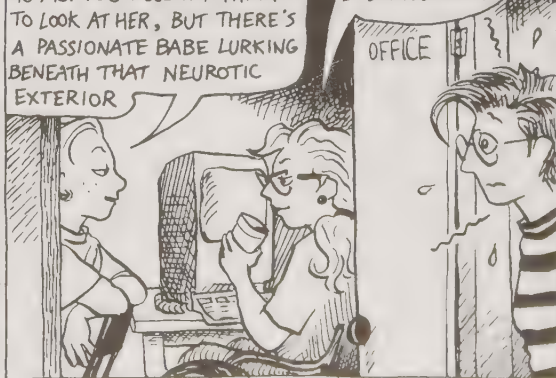
MAYBE YOU OUGHTA TAKE HER HOME.

I'LL GET MY JACKET.



JUST GO EASY WHEN YOU TALK TO MO. YOU WOULDN'T THINK IT TO LOOK AT HER, BUT THERE'S A PASSIONATE BABE LURKING BENEATH THAT NEUROTIC EXTERIOR

OH, BELIEVE ME, I'VE THOUGHT IT.



# a rock and a hard place

©1993 by ALISON BECHDEL

173

HEY, CLARICE! I THOUGHT I'D DROP IN AND RELIEVE THE BOREDOM AND ISOLATION OF YOUR LIMITED LITTLE NUCLEAR FAMILY CIRCLE. HELLO, RAFAEL!



SAY HELLO TO AUNT MO! TELL HER SHE JUST MISSED YOUR FEEDING AND YOUR DIAPER CHANGE AND YOUR BURP!

BUT MAYBE YOU'RE BEYOND HELP.



AND WHAT A WORLD-CLASS BURP IT WAS, MY LITTLE SUGARTOES!

HI, TONI! HOW'RE THEY HANGING?



OH, GOD. MY NIPPLES ARE CRACKED, I'M CONSTANTLY LEAKING, HE EATS EVERY TWO HOURS 'ROUND THE CLOCK... I FEEL LIKE A FUCKING HOLSTEIN.

HONEY, NO MORE SWEARING, REMEMBER?

MO, DID YOU SEE OUR BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE LATEST TRIBUNE?



NOT YET. BUT ISN'T THIS PIECE ABOUT THE NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN TASK FORCE INTERESTING?



THE HIGH-POWERED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RESIGNS AFTER SIX MONTHS, IN A CLASH OVER STRATEGIES TO EXPAND THE ORGANIZATION. DON'T YOU LOVE THIS STUFF?



SOUNDS LIKE SHE WANTED TO TURN THE GRASSROOTS ACTIVIST-BASED TASK FORCE INTO A MORE CORPORATE, MAINSTREAM POLITICAL POWER, LIKE THE HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMPAGNE FUND.



IT'S AN INTERESTING DILEMMA, THOUGH. HOW DOES A NONPROFIT GAIN ENOUGH BUCKS AND INFLUENCE TO TAKE ON THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT, YET NOT LOSE THE PULSE OF THE QUEER ON THE STREET?

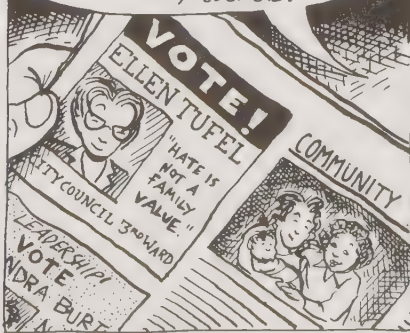


READ OUR ANNOUNCEMENT, MO. IT'S ON PAGE 10.

OKAY, OKAY! **HEY!** ISN'T THIS HARRIET'S NEW GIRLFRIEND?!



YEAH! SHE'S RUNNING AGAINST SOME TRADITIONAL VALUES COALITION TYPE TO REPRESENT OUR WARD ON THE CITY COUNCIL!



OH, THAT'S JUST **GREAT**. WHO AM I GONNA **VOTE** FOR?

**WAAA!**



# hot stuff

©1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

IT'S SATURDAY EVENING...

OUCH! LOOKS LIKE YOU CLOSED YOUR MOUTH TOO CLOSE TO THE FLAME.

NO KIDDING.

WHAT?

174

LOIS BURN'T HER LIP EATING FIRE WITH THE LESBIAN AVENGERS.

IT WAS SO COOL! YOU SHOULD BEEN THERE! Y'KNOW DICK LILLY, THE TRADITIONAL VALUES COALITION GUY WHO'S RUNNING FOR CITY COUNCIL?

WE PICKETED HIS PANCAKE BREAKFAST FUND-RAISER DRESSED UP LIKE GIANT FLAMING CRÊPES SUZETTES!

Y'KNOW, THAT REMINDS ME OF ONE TIME BEFORE I GOT SOBER WHEN A BUDDY LIT MY APRICOT BRANDY ON FIRE AND SINGED ALL MY EYELASHES...

COME ON, JUNE, OR WE'LL MISS OUR MEETING.

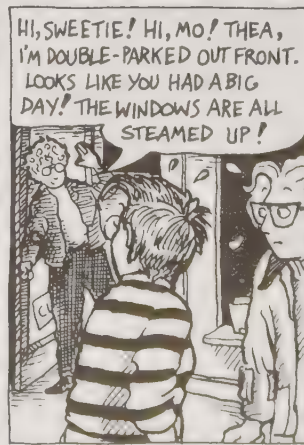
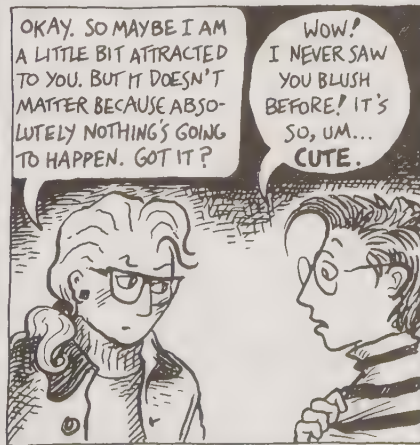
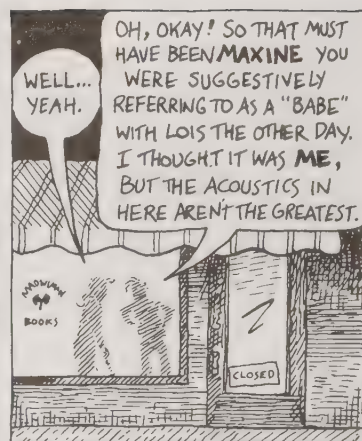
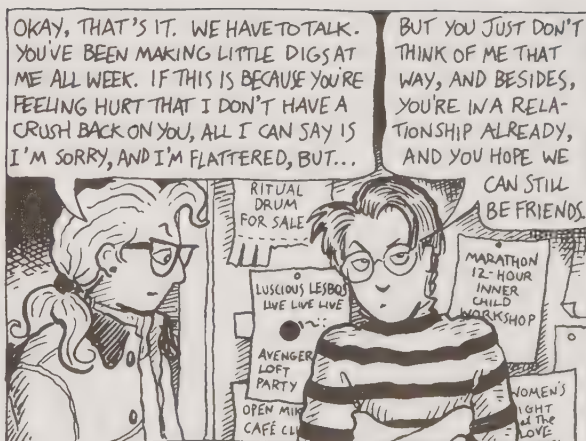
MEANWHILE, OVER AT MADWIMMIN BOOKS...

I'M SORRY, WE'RE CLOSING.

OH... I JUST WANTED TO DROP OFF THIS CAMPAIGN POSTER FOR ELLEN TUFEL. COULD YOU PUT IT UP ON YOUR BULLETIN BOARD?

VOTE!  
ELLEN TUFEL  
CITY COUNCIL  
"HATE IS NOT A FAMILY VALUE"





# ADVICE & DISSENT

©1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

175

YOU TOLD HER YOU WERE ATTRACTED TO HER BUT YOU'RE NOT GONNA HAVE AN AFFAIR? I DON'T GET IT.

LOIS, HAVEN'T YOU EVER BEEN ATTRACTED TO A PERSON AND NOT ACTED ON IT?

NO. ALTHOUGH I HAVE ACTED ON IT WITH PEOPLE I WASN'T PARTICULARLY ATTRACTED TO.

HOW NICE FOR YOU. LISTEN, MAXINE AND I ARE COMMITTED TO A MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP, BUT WE'VE AGREED IT'S HEALTHY TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR FEELINGS FOR OTHER WOMEN.

SO WHY NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THEM ALL THE WAY? ISN'T THAT EVEN HEALTHIER? MO HASN'T GOTTEN ANY IN OVER A YEAR! IMAGINE HOW HOT SHE'D BE!

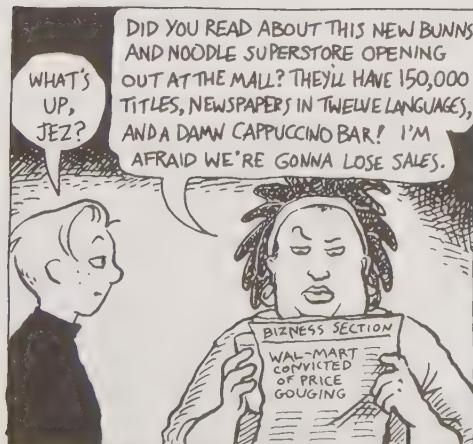
COULD YOU PLEASE KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN? IT WAS YOUR BIG MOUTH THAT STARTED THIS WHOLE THING IN THE FIRST PLACE!

UH, THEA.. SOMEONE NEEDS INFORMATION ABOUT A COMPACT DISC.

OVER A YEAR!

OKAY. THANKS, MO.

LOIS, DID YOU FEEL THAT? COULD YOU SENSE THE **ELECTRICITY** BETWEEN US? I CAN'T STAND IT!

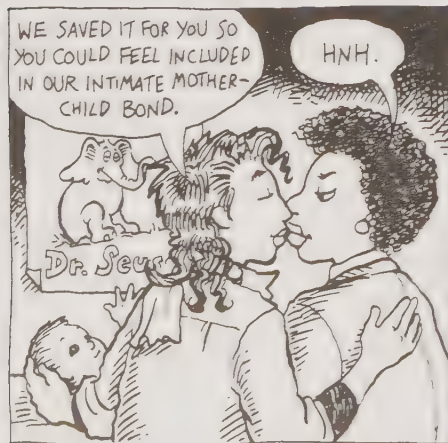
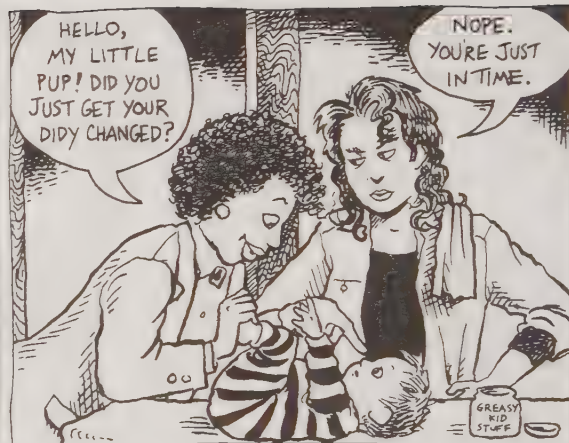
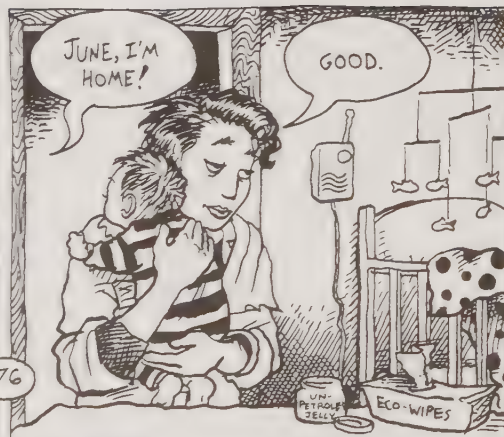




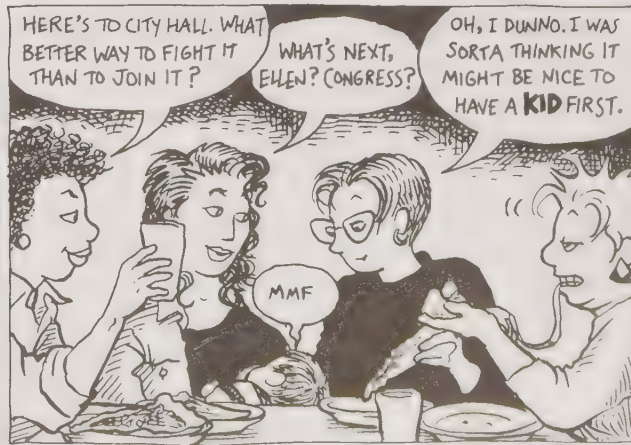
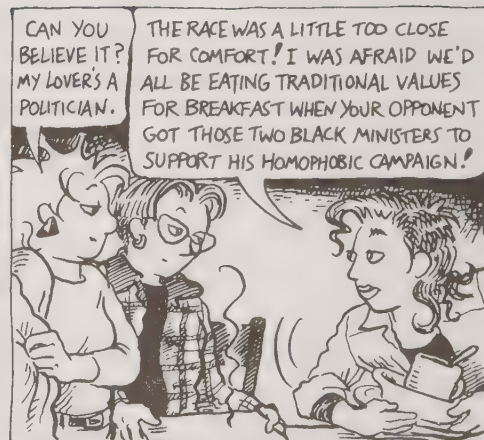
# WOMEN'S WORK

©1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

176



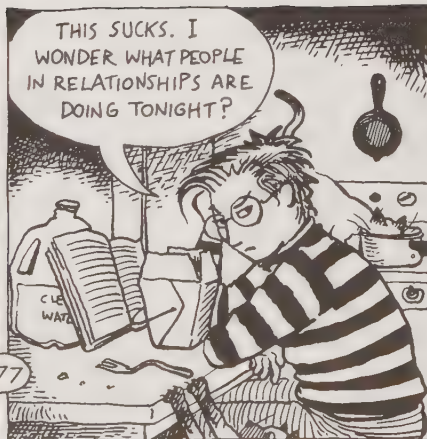




# IT TAKES TWO

©1993 BY  
ALISON BECHDEL

177



GOOD  
QUESTION!

LET'S  
GO  
SEE.

THEY'RE SHARING THE DAY'S EXPERIENCES...

WHEN I SAID IT'S HEALTHY FOR US TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR ATTRAC-TIONS TO OTHER WOMEN, I MEANT **TO EACH OTHER!** AT LEAST YOU COULD'VE TOLD ME **FIRST!**

MAXINE, WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL? SO MO KNOWS I THINK SHE'S CUTE, SO WHAT? IT'S JUST A FUN LITTLE THING TO MAKE MY JOB LESS BORING!



...RELAXING OVER DINNER...

THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT IS **CREAMING** US WITH ANTI-GAY INITIATIVES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY! WE HAVE TO BUILD COALITIONS WITH OTHER PROGRES-SIVES! THESE WHITE, FUNDAMENTALIST FASCISTS ARE WINNING VOTES FROM PEOPLE OF COLOR BY CONVINCING THEM GAYS & LESBIANS WANT "SPECIAL RIGHTS." WE HAVE SO MUCH WORK TO DO!

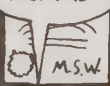
ELLEN, YOU'VE BEEN GOING ON LIKE THIS FOR DAYS! I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY MORE. WILL YOU JUST SHUT UP AND EAT YOUR POT PIE?



...GROWING...

OKAY, I'D LIKE TO BE-GIN WITH SOME BASIC QUESTIONS. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN TOGETHER?

THREE MONTHS.



AND CHANGING...

BUT YOSHI, IT'S JUST **SEX**. AND WE'RE ALWAYS SAFE, RIGHT?



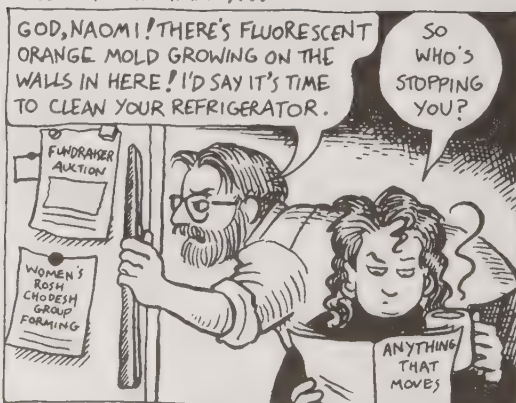


...PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE,...

MALIKA, I **CAN'T!** I'VE GOTTA WORK ON MY DISSERTATION OVER CHRISTMAS. WHY DON'T YOU COME **HERE?**... WELL, YOU DON'T **HAVE** TO SIT AROUND ALL DAY. BRING ONE OF YOUR "PROJECTS." ... I AM **NOT** PATRONIZING YOU! JEEZIZ, YOU'RE SO SENSITIVE!



EXPLORING INTIMACY...



AND BONDING AROUND LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES.



WAAHAAAAHAAAA

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU CAN'T WEAR EARPLUGS! HOW CAN YOU HEAR HIM IF SOMETHING'S REALLY WRONG?



Hmmm.





# AKISS is just AKISS

©1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

178

MMM. JEZANNA'S DOUBLE CHOCOLATE RASPBERRY ESPRESSO NEW YEAR'S CHEESECAKE IS **ORGASMIC**.

UH... YEAH, IT IS. CAN I GET YOU ANOTHER PIECE?



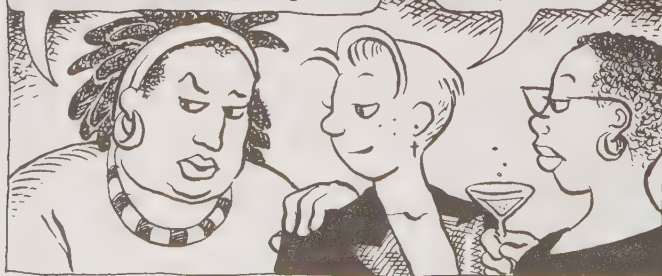
ENJOYING THE PARTY, GIRLS? THEA, I'M **SO** SORRY MAXINE COULDN'T MAKE IT!

THANKS, JEZ. SHE'S GOT THE FLU.



LOIS, THE BOBBSEY TWINS OVER THERE ARE MAKING ME NERVOUS. THEIR LITTLE CRUSH WAS CUTE FOR A WHILE, BUT I CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE TWO OF MY EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN SOME SORDID SEXUAL SOAP OPERA.

RELAX. IT'S NOT A REAL ATTRACTION. IF THEA WAS ACTUALLY AVAILABLE, THEY WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH EACH OTHER.

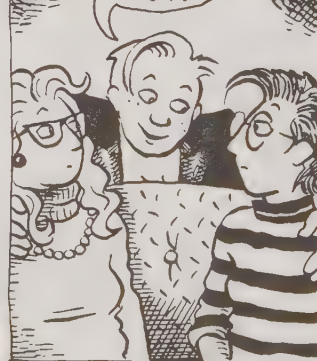


HUH. LOOKS TO ME LIKE THEY'D HAVE A PRETTY GOOD IDEA.

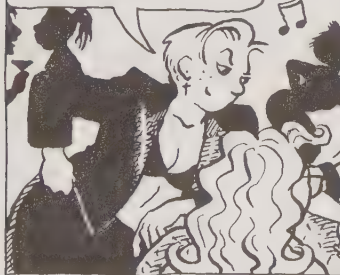
OKAY. I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT. IT'S TIME MO GOT ON WITH HER LIFE, ANYWAY.



HEY! GREAT PARTY, HUH?



WHAT I LOVE BEST ABOUT NEW YEAR'S EVE IS THAT LITTLE WINDOW OF SEXUAL LAWLESSNESS AT MIDNIGHT WHEN YOU GET TO KISS EVERYONE. KIND OF LIKE GROWN-UP SPIN-THE-BOTTLE.



Y'KNOW, I'VE ALWAYS REGRETTED THAT I NEVER GOT TO PLAY SPIN-THE-BOTTLE WITH OTHER LITTLE DYKES WHEN I WAS A KID, INSTEAD OF BOYS.



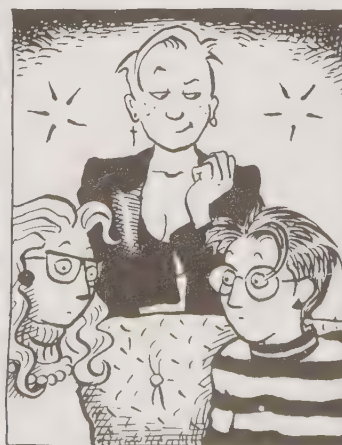
I NEVER GOT TO PLAY SPIN THE BOTTLE WITH ANYONE.



FIVE... FOUR... THREE... TWO... ONE..



HAPPY NEW YEAR!



IN THE WEE HOURS OF JANUARY FIRST...

JEEZ. I HOPE I DIDN'T CATCH ANY OF MAXINE'S **FLU** GERMS FROM THEA.



BELIEVE ME, YOU'RE GONNA BE JUST FINE.



# INTER ACTIVE

©1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

179

>CLIK!<  
... A GUNMAN  
KILLED FIVE AND  
WOUNDED TWELVE  
IN A CROWDED  
FAST FOOD RES...

WHY IS IT WOMEN GET PEGGED  
AS EMOTIONAL AND UNPREDICTABLE  
WHEN IT'S **MEN** WHO GO AROUND  
MOWING DOWN PASSERS-BY WITH  
SEMI-AUTOMATIC WEAPONS?  
IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE ANY...



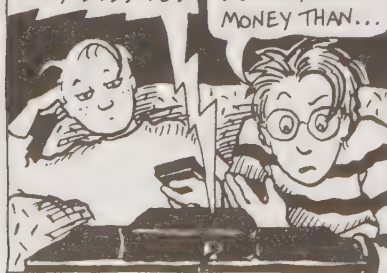
>CLIK!<...  
THE TWO-POUND  
BACON-CHEESE-  
BURGER! ONLY AT  
CARRION KING!  
COME CHOW  
DOWN WITH US!

YEAH, RIGHT. IF SOME  
GUY WITH AN ASSAULT  
RIFLE DOESN'T WIPE  
ME OUT, THE **E. COLI**  
WILL. WHY DON'T PEOPLE  
GET A CLUE AND BE-  
COME VEGETARI...



>CLIK!<  
... THIS STUNNING  
2.5 CARAT  
CITRINE SOLI-  
TAIRE RING,  
ONLY \$199.95!

WHO **BUYS** THIS  
SHIT?! ARE THERE  
ACTUALLY PEOPLE  
WHO HAVE NO-  
THING BETTER TO  
DO WITH THEIR  
MONEY THAN...



>CLIK!<  
**WIL-  
MAA!**

WHAT IS WITH THIS NOSTALGIA  
CRAZE? CAN YOU BELIEVE  
KIDS TODAY ARE WATCHING THE  
SAME SEXIST GARBAGE WE  
GREW UP WITH? IT MUST BE  
SOME KINDA CONSPIRACY TO...



>CLIK!<  
... HURRY NOW  
TO THE  
WAL-MART  
NEAREST  
YOU!

WELL LET'S **GO!** I'D MUCH RA-  
THER SHOP IN A NIGHTMARISH,  
TEN ZILLION SQUARE-FOOT  
LABYRINTH THAN PAY 50 CENTS  
MORE AT A SMALL, OWNER-  
RUN STORE! AFTER ALL, IT'S...





>CLIK!< ...WITH A SUBSCRIPTION TO THE LIMBAUGH LETTER, YOU WON'T EVER HAVE TO THINK FOR YOURSELF AGAIN!



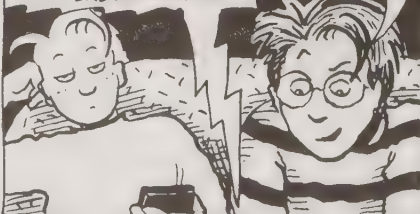
LOOKIT THAT POMPOUS, PANDERING DEMAGOGUE! DID YOU KNOW THEY DON'T LET ANYONE INTO HIS STUDIO AUDIENCE WHO HAS AN I.Q. OVER...

>CLIK!< ...THE JOHN WAYNE BOBBITT STORY IS BROUGHT TO YOU TONIGHT BY GINSU CUTLERY...



HIS WIFE SHOULD A PUT THAT THING DOWN THE GARBAGE DISPOSAL AND SAVED US ALL A LOT OF...

>CLIK!< ...AS IT SAYS IN FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:41, FILTHY HOMASECKSHULS ARE ON A MISSION FROM SATAN TO SEDUCE OUR CHILDREN. YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL ENSURE THAT WE...



HEY, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU GOT THE HATE CHANNEL! LET'S CALL UP THEIR 800 NUMBER, AND...

>CLIK!< ...TRAIN FOR AN EXCITING NEW CAREER IN DATA ENTRY! >CLIK!< ...SLEET MIXED WITH SNOW... >CLIK!<



OUR SOCIETY IS SPIRITUALLY DEAD! PEOPLE DON'T HAVE MEANINGFUL WORK ANYMORE! THE ONLY CONTACT WE HAVE WITH THE NATURAL WORLD IS ON THE WEATHER CHANNEL! AND THEN WE ACT LIKE IT'S SUCH A BIG MYSTERY THAT DEPRESSION, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, AND CANCER ARE EPIDEMIC!



CLIK! NOT TO MENTION ATTENTION-DEFICIT DISORDER.

HEY! I WAS WATCHING THAT BABE IN THE SOLOFLEX COMMERCIAL!

# on her back

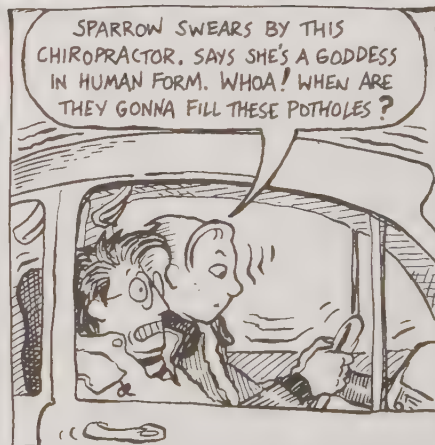
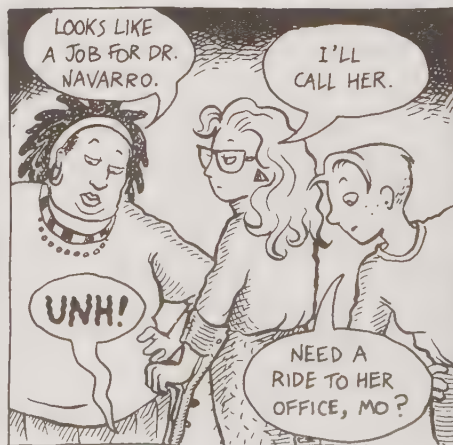
© 1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

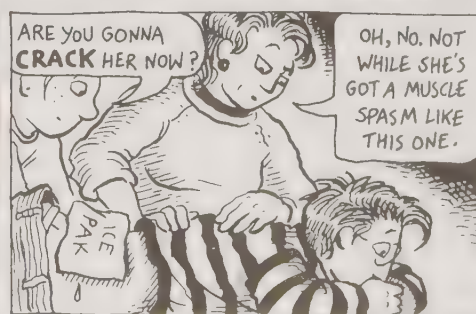
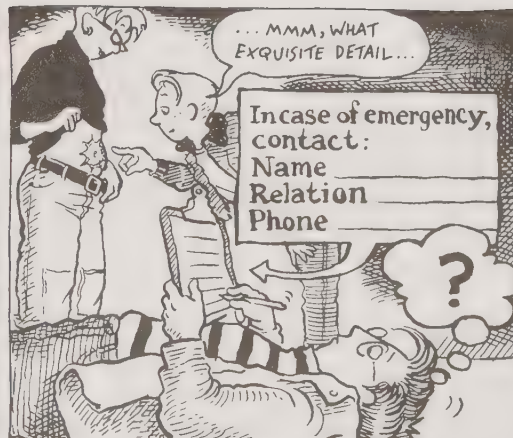
ONE AFTERNOON AMID THE BUSTLE AND COMMERCE  
OF OUR FAVORITE FEMINIST BOOK EMPORIUM...

... AND WHEN YOU'RE DONE UNPACKING THOSE, CHECK  
THEM OFF ON THE PURCHASE  
ORDER BEFORE YOU...



180





*BROKEN, ALONE, AND REFERRED TO IN THE THIRD PERSON WHILE STILL PRESENT... CAN OUR HEROINE POSSIBLY SINK ANY LOWER? DON'T MISS THE NEXT TAUT, WRENCHING EPISODE!*



# cold snap

© 1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

181

MO, IT'S BELOW ZERO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT TONIGHT WITH A BAD BACK?!



I COULDN'T STAND LYING IN BED ANYMORE, SO I WENT TO WORK TODAY. JEZANNA ASKED ME TO BRING YOU THESE LEDGERS FROM THE BOOKSTORE.

THANK GOD! WORK I CAN DO WITH MY **BRAIN** INSTEAD OF MY **BREASTS**.

HI, MO! PULL UP A CHAIR FOR SOME STRAINED BEETS AND RICE.



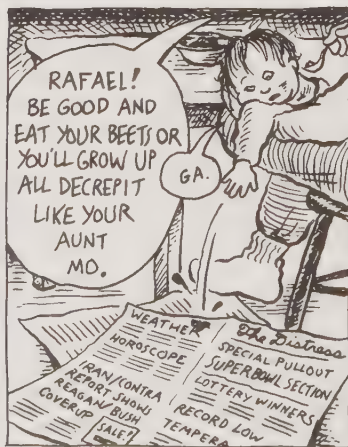
HELLO, RAFFI! HEY! LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE GROWING A LITTLE FANG!

YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.



RAFAEL! BE GOOD AND EAT YOUR BEETS OR YOU'LL GROW UP ALL DECREPIT LIKE YOUR AUNT MO.

GA.



OOF! YOU SOUND LIKE MY CHIROPRACTOR. SHE SAYS I NEED TO EXERCISE. LIKE, I'M SURE I'M GONNA PUT ON SOME KIND OF SPANDEX THONG AND START PUMPING LEAD.



IRON. WHY DON'T YOU JOIN THE Y? IT'S QUITE A BABE SCENE, FROM WHAT I HEAR.

YEAH, IF YOU LIKE THAT VIGOROUS, OVER-ACHIEVING TYPE. HARRIET'S GIRLFRIEND IS PROBABLY A CHARTER MEMBER.



MEANWHILE, IT'S EVEN CHILLIER ACROSS TOWN

MALIKA, I'M SORRY! I KNOW YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO GO, AND I KNOW IT MEANS WE WON'T SEE EACH OTHER TILL APRIL, BUT...



GINGER, MY ROOM IS FREEZING! CAN I BORROW YOUR SPACE HEATER? OH, AND ALSO YOUR "COMPLETE HISTORY OF FUNK" C.D.'S?



THANKS.

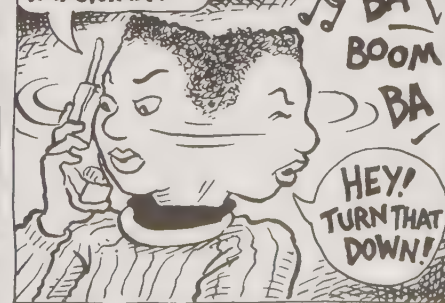
OF COURSE I STILL LOVE YOU! BUT THERE ARE OTHER THINGS IN MY LIFE BESIDES THIS RELATIONSHIP!



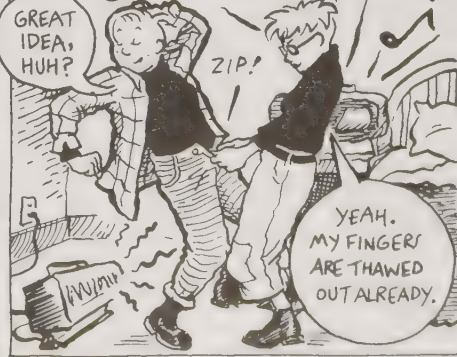
OH, DON'T GIVE ME THAT NOBLE ACTIVIST RAP. YOU'RE GOING TO THE NATIONAL BLACK GAY AND LESBIAN CONFERENCE INSTEAD OF COMING OUT HERE BECAUSE YOU'RE SCARED OF GETTING CLOSE TO ME!



MALIKA, THAT IS SO... SO GRANDIOSE! YOU'RE NOT THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE! I'M GOING BECAUSE IT'S IMPORTANT.



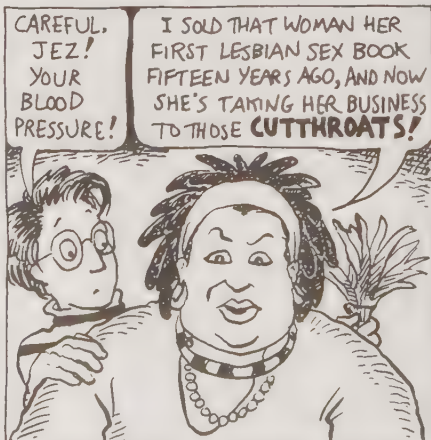
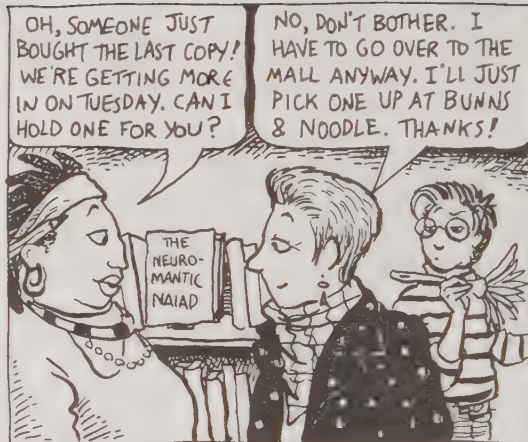
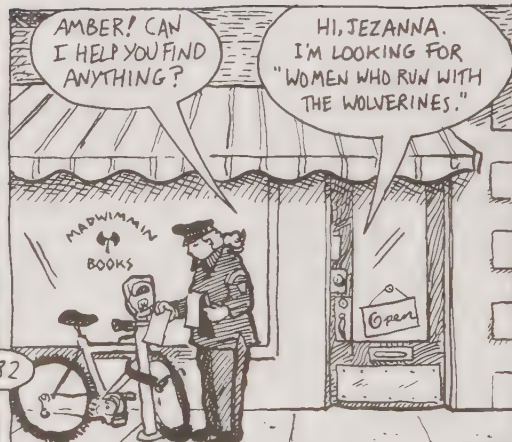
C'MON AND MOVE! C'MON AND GROO-OOOVE!



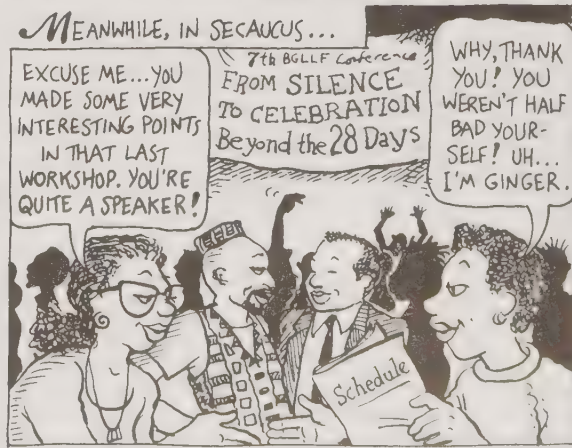
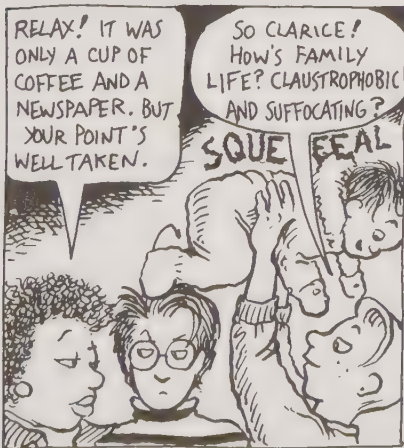
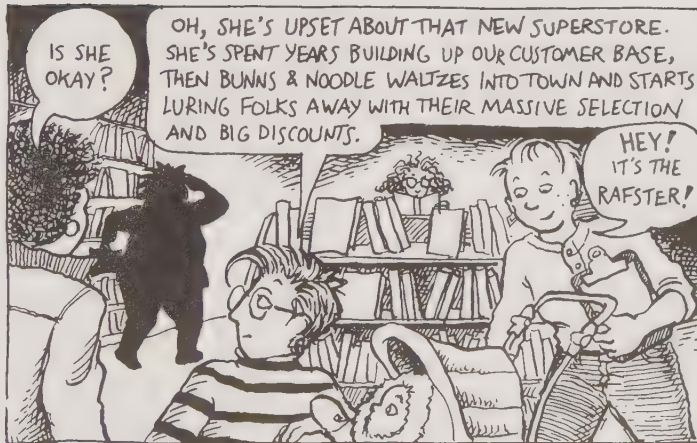


# LOYALTY

© 1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL



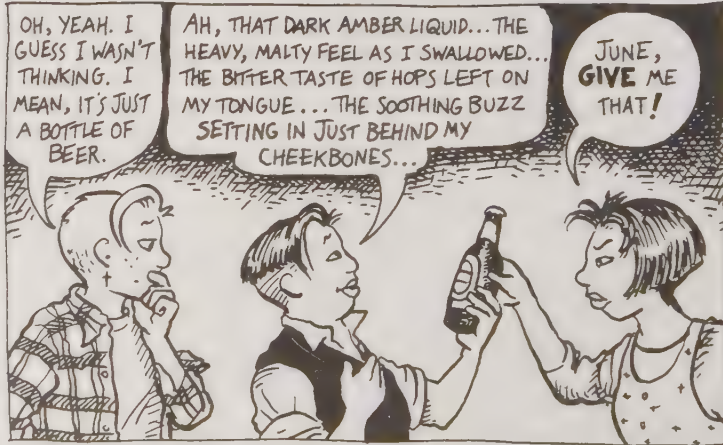
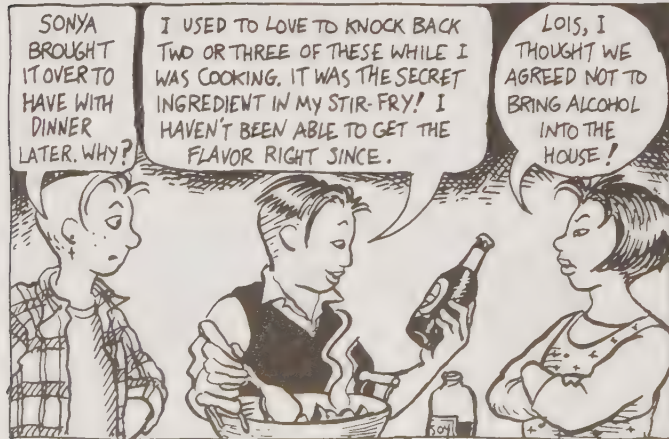
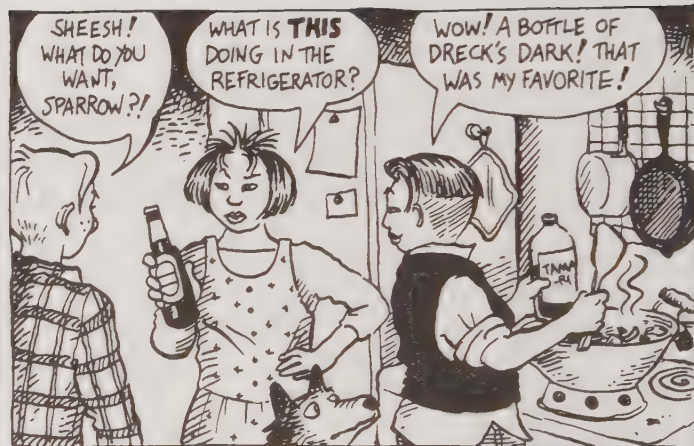




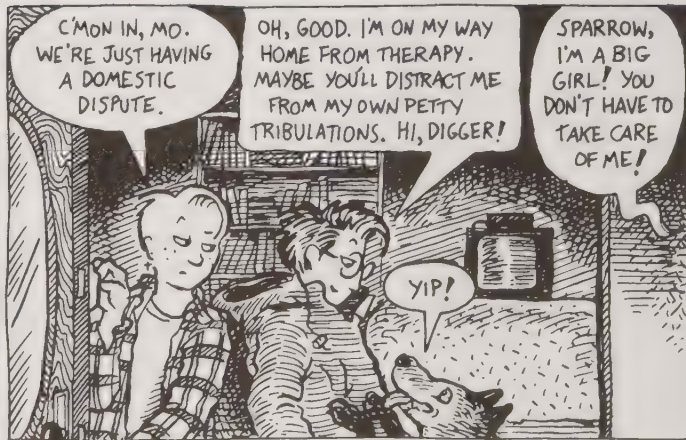
# LET GO AND LET MO

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

183







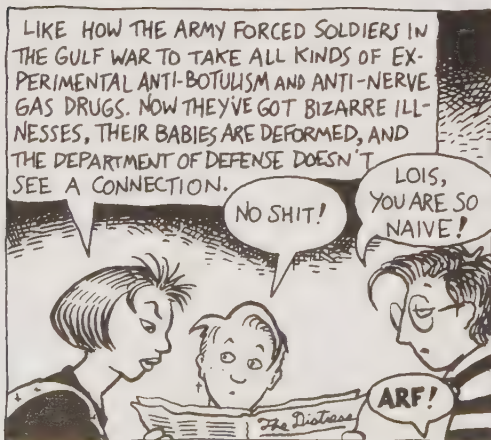
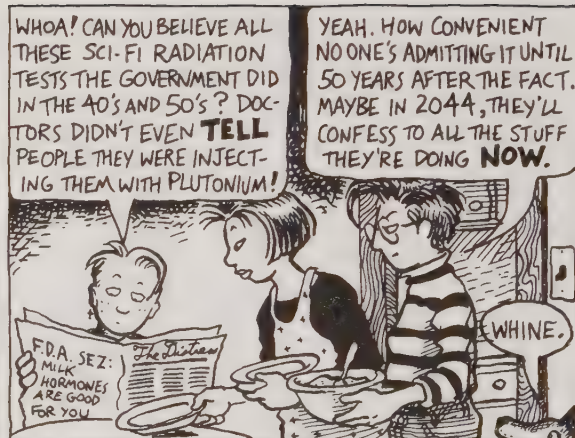


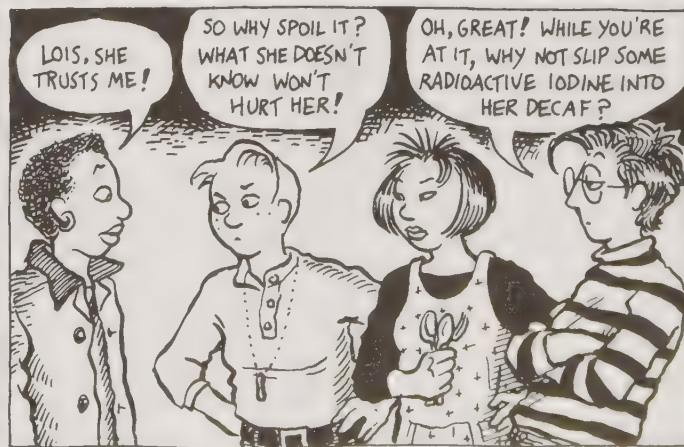
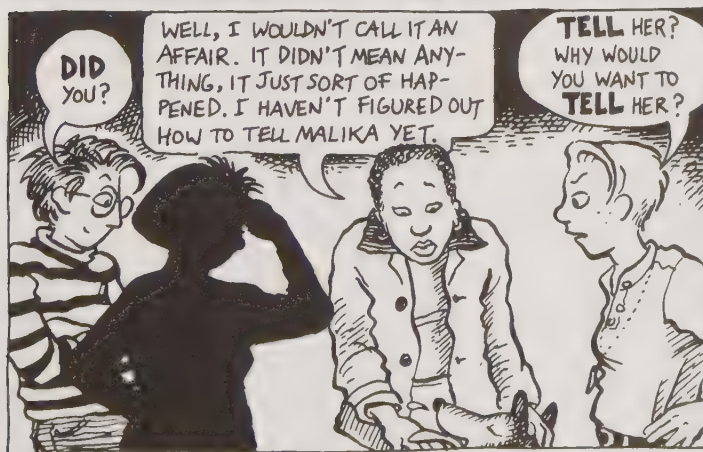
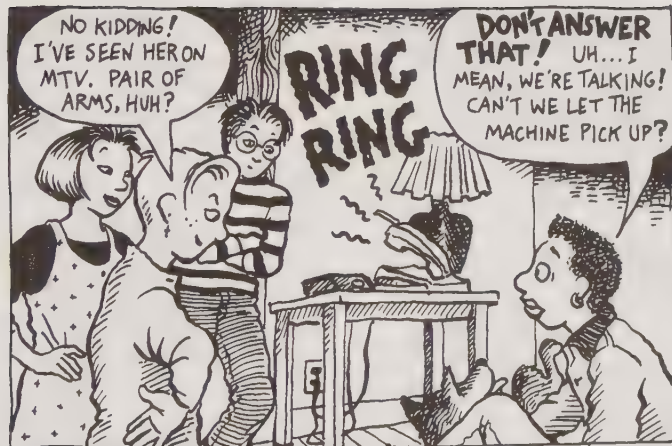
# hummus where the heart is

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

GINGER IS EXPECTED HOME IMMINENTLY FROM THE BLACK GAY AND LESBIAN LEADERSHIP FORUM CONFERENCE, AND MO HAS DROPPED BY FOR DINNER.

184



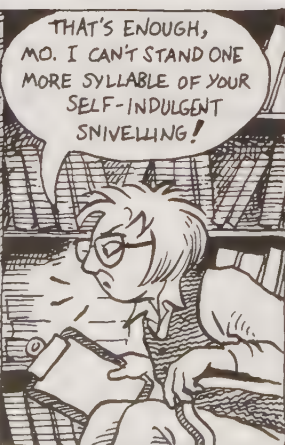
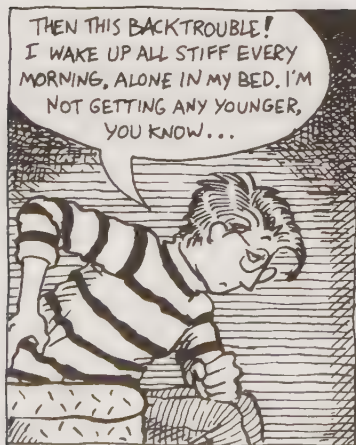
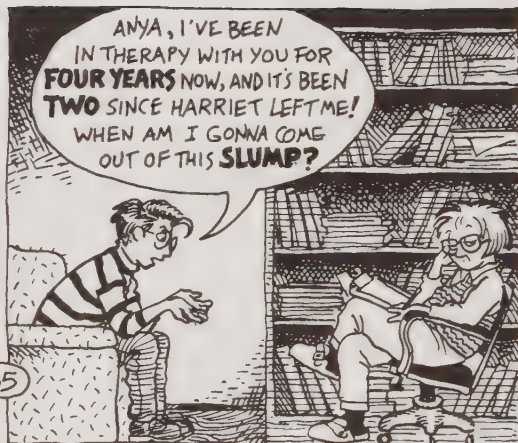




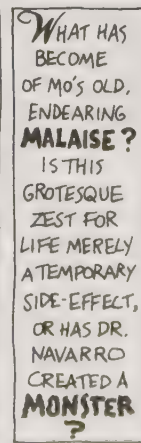
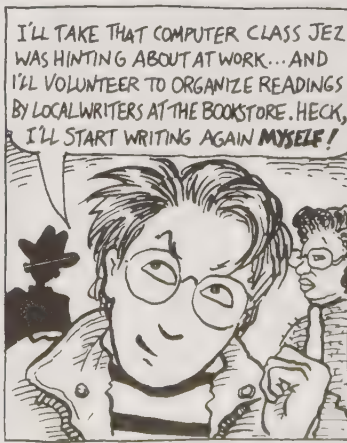
# The AWAKEN- ING

© 1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

185







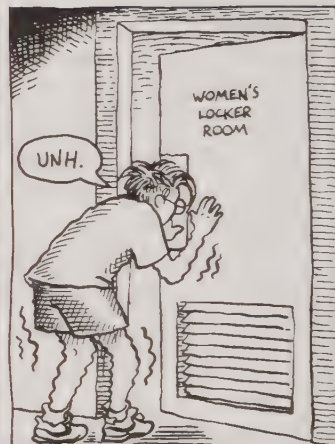
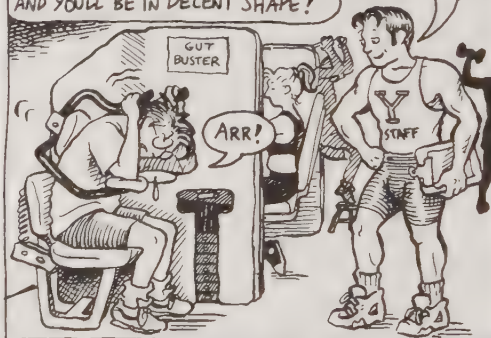
# WEIGHTY MATTERS

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

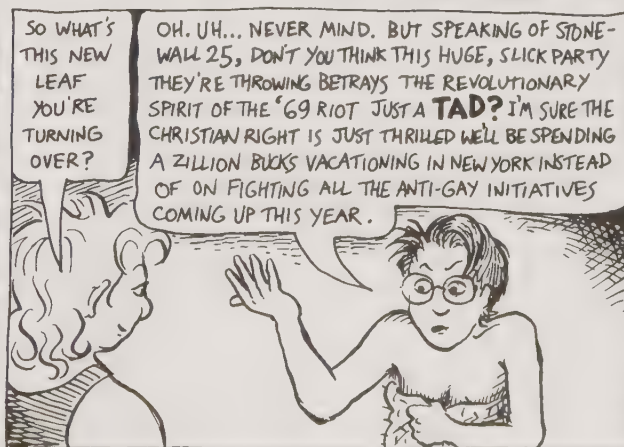
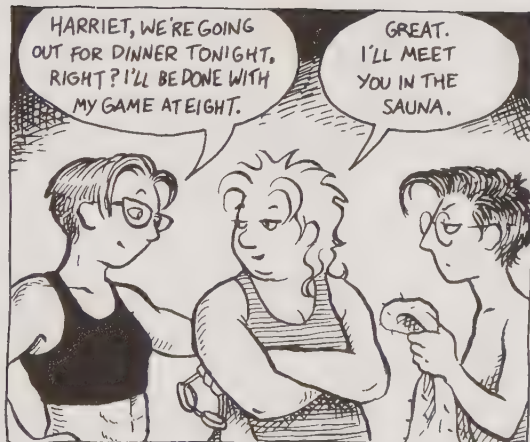
186

STRANGELY ENERGIZED BY HER RECENT CHIROPRACTIC ADJUSTMENT, OUR HEROINE UNDERTAKES AN AMBITIOUS REGIMEN OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT.

...NINE...**TEN!** OKAY, YOU'RE ALL DONE, MO! THAT'S THE LAST MACHINE ON THE CIRCUIT. NOT BAD FOR YOUR FIRST DAY. A FEW MONTHS WORKING OUT LIKE THAT, AND YOU'LL BE IN DECENT SHAPE!











# CAPTIVE

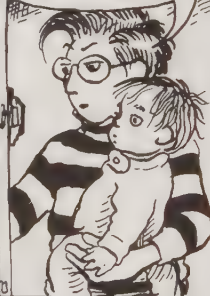
© 1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

187

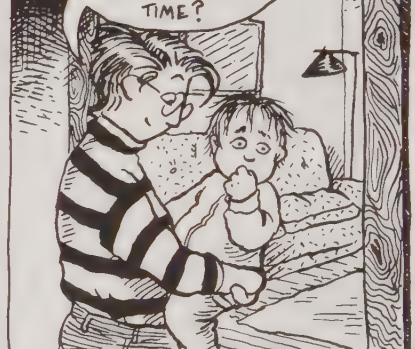
HE'S ALL READY FOR BED.  
JUST PUT HIM IN HIS CRIB IN HALF  
AN HOUR OR SO. ARE YOU SURE  
YOU'LL BE OKAY, MO?



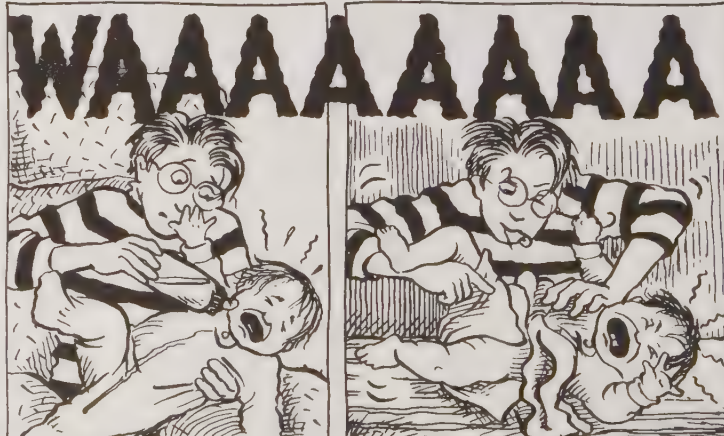
TONI, I KNOW WHAT I'M  
DOING! I'M A RESPONSIBLE  
ADULT! THE KID'LL STILL BE  
ALIVE WHEN YOU GET  
BACK. NOW GO!

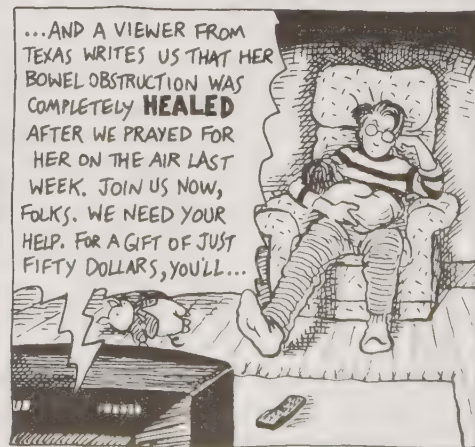
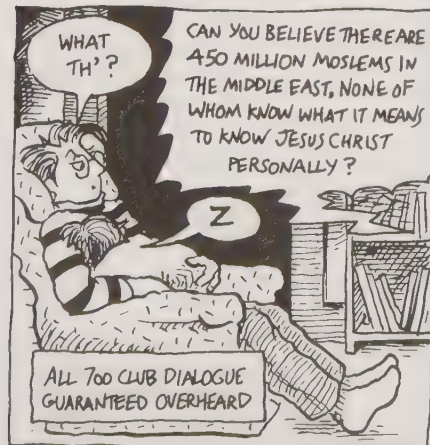


OKAY, RAFAEL.  
WHAT'LL WE DO  
UNTIL BED-  
TIME?



HEY, IT'S OKAY! THEY DIDN'T  
REALLY ABANDON YOU! THEY JUST  
LEFT YOU WITH YOUR AUNT MO FOR  
A COUPLE HOURS. I'M GREAT  
WITH KIDS!







# the best policy

© 1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

188

MALIKA'S COMING FOR THE WEEKEND. I WAS THINKING MAYBE YOU AND I SHOULD CLEAR OUT TONIGHT SO SHE AND GINGER CAN HAVE SOME TIME ALONE.

HOW THOUGHTFUL, IF UNCHARACTERISTIC OF YOU, LOIS. SO, I GUESS IF MALIKA'S FLYING IN ALL THE WAY FROM SAN FRANCISCO, SHE MUST HAVE FORGIVEN GINGER'S LITTLE CONFERENCE TRYST.

UH... GINGER DECIDED IT WASN'T THE SORT OF THING SHE COULD TELL HER OVER THE PHONE.

OH MY GOD! POOR MALIKA! Y'KNOW, I THINK I'LL CLEAR OUT FOR THE WHOLE WEEKEND.

ME TOO. I'LL BE AT SONJA'S. NORMALLY I AVOID WEEKEND-LONG DATES--THERE'S SOMETHING SO SORDIDLY DOMESTIC ABOUT WAKING UP TWO DAYS IN A ROW WITH THE SAME PERSON--BUT IN THIS CASE, I'M MAKING AN EXCEPTION.

CLIK! ⚡

HI, MALIKA! YOU LOOK GREAT! HOW WAS YOUR FLIGHT?

RIF!

GOTTA RUN!

CIAO!

NOW ALL **THREE** OF YOU ARE ACTING FISHY. WHAT'S GOING ON? DID YOU LEAVE ONE OF OUR "PERSONAL" VIDEOTAPES IN THE VCR AGAIN?

SLAM!

A TIP O' THE NIB TO RACHEL LURIE!



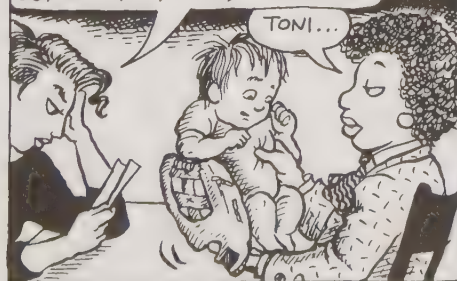
MEANWHILE, CIARICE IS HOME FROM THE SALT MINES.



MAYBE IT'S A BABY PRESENT. YOU HAVEN'T HEARD FROM THEM SINCE RAFFI WAS BORN. THEIR GUILT REFLEXES MUST FINALLY BE KICKING IN. LET'S OPEN IT!



"THANK YOU FOR THE SNAPSHOTS. HE LOOKS SO MUCH LIKE YOUR TIO HECTOR. I JUST PRAY YOU'VE TAKEN HIM TO BE BAPTIZED, AND THAT IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR YOU TO FIND A HUSBAND. A CHILD NEEDS TWO PARENTS, AND A BOY ESPECIALLY NEEDS A FATHER."



I KNOW, I KNOW. I HAVE TO DO IT. AFTER ALL, WHAT KIND OF AN EXAMPLE AM I SETTING RAFAEL IF I CAN'T TELL MY OWN PARENTS I'M A LESBIAN?



BELIEVE ME, HON. TELLING THEM THE TRUTH CAN ULTIMATELY ONLY IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIP.

AM I **MAD** AT YOU? FOR DIDLING SOME BIMBO? OH, GIRL. WHEN I GET MAD, YOU WON'T HAVE TO ASK. I'M JUST WARMING UP. I GOTTA **PACE** MYSELF IF I WANT TO MAKE YOU **SUFFER** WITHOUT **PAUSE** FOR THE REMAINDER OF YOUR BORN DAYS.



# brunette ambition

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

189

HI, I'M MIKO. I SAW THE NOTICE ABOUT THE "MADWIMMIN READ" SERIES FOR LOCAL LESBIAN WRITERS, AND I WANTED TO DROP OFF SOME OF MY WORK.

MADWIMMIN  
BOOKS

OH, GREAT! YOU'RE THE THIRD PERSON TO SUBMIT STUFF! I THINK WE'RE GONNA HAVE SOME EXCITING READINGS. LET ME LOOK THIS OVER, AND THEN I'LL CALL YOU ABOUT A DATE.

HEY, GIRL! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE A WRITER!

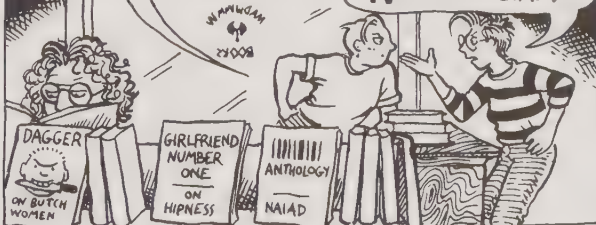
HI, LOIS! YEAH, I'VE BEEN PUBLISHED IN A FEW JOURNALS, AND I JUST SENT MY FIRST MANUSCRIPT OUT. IT'S A COLLECTION OF STORIES ABOUT MY CLIENTS.



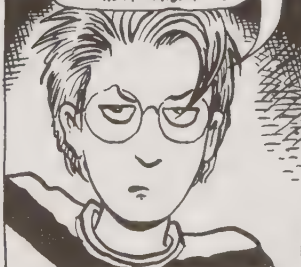


WHAT'S WRONG WITH CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LESBIAN & GAY CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT?

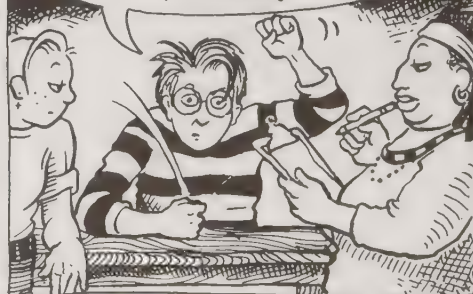
WELL, CALL ME IDEALISTIC, BUT I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE NICE TO ACTUALLY **HAVE** CIVIL RIGHTS BEFORE WE KICK BACK AND PARTY. I MEAN, THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT IS **TRAMPLING** US, AND WE ACT LIKE IT'S A MAJOR POLITICAL TRIUMPH TO HAVE TWO GAY MEN BUYING A **TABLE** TOGETHER IN A **TV COMMERCIAL!**



I MISS THE GOOD OLD DAYS, WHEN WE UNDERSTOOD THAT QUEER OPPRESSION WAS CONNECTED TO RACISM, SEXISM, WORKER EXPLOITATION, AND MILITARISM...



IN THE **EARLY** DAYS OF THIS MOVEMENT, WE WEREN'T SHOPPING FOR A **TABLE!** AND WE SURE AS HELL DIDN'T WANT A **PLACE** AT THE **TABLE!** WE WANTED TO **KNOCK THE FRICKIN' TABLE OVER!**



MO, DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF THIS MOVEMENT, YOU WERE WEARING A TRAINING BRA. LISTEN, THE BATHROOM NEEDS A ONCE-OVER. COULD YOU DO IT BEFORE YOU SHELVE THE NEW STOCK?

AW, JEZ! HOW COME YOU ONLY LET ME DO MENIAL TASKS? I'VE BEEN WORKING HERE FOR YEARS, I'M VOL-UNTEERING MY TIME ON THIS WRITER'S SERIES, I'VE SIGNED UP TO TAKE "COMPUTERS FOR THE TECHNOLOGICAL- LY STUNTED," LIKE YOU WANTED...



I THINK IT'S TIME YOU GAVE ME MORE RESPONSIBILITY AROUND HERE.

OKAY, YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEP- ING THE BATHROOM CLEAN. DON'T MAKE ME HAVE TO REMIND YOU.



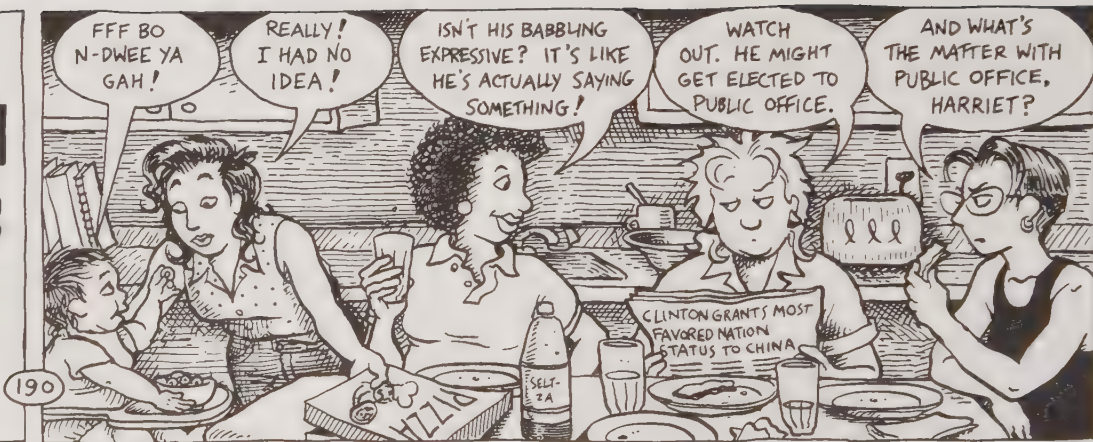
HUH. HOW D'YOU THINK I'D LOOK WITH DARK HAIR?





# unminced words

© 1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

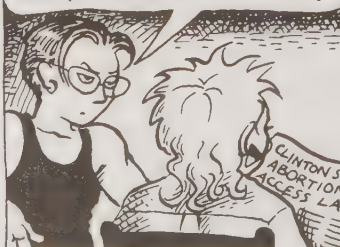


I DIDN'T MEAN YOU AND THE CITY COUNCIL, ELLEN. I'M JUST DEPRESSED ABOUT THE STATE OF AMERICAN POLITICS IN GENERAL.

YEAH. CLINTON'S TURNING OUT TO BE A REAL DISAPPOINTMENT.



HEY, I'D RATHER BE DISAPPOINTED THAN FEARFUL FOR MY LIFE, LIKE I WAS UNDER REAGAN AND BUSH. WHAT GETS ME IS THE WAY THESE OBSESSIVE CONSERVATIVES KEEP TRYING TO TRIP CLINTON UP. I MEAN, LET THE GUY DO HIS JOB!



I THINK THEIR LITTLE TRICKS ARE BACKFIRING. TO **MOST** PEOPLE, IT'S OBVIOUS THAT THE WHITEWATER ALLEGATIONS AND THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT SUIT ARE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED. AND EVERYONE **ELSE** IS TOO JADED TO CARE IF BILL FUCKS HIS CAT.





DO YOU WANT THE HONOR OF RECORDING THAT UNDER "BABY'S FIRST WORD," OR SHALL I?

MEANWHILE, MALIKA'S VISIT DRAWS TO A CLOSE...

HERE'S A NEWS FLASH. "A RECENT STUDY SHOWS AFRICAN AMERICAN GAY MEN AND WOMEN HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER LEVELS OF CHRONIC STRESS THAN HETEROSEXUAL BLACKS AND WHITES, AND LESBIAN AFRICAN AMERICANS SUFFER FROM MORE STRESS THAN THEIR GAY COUNTERPARTS."

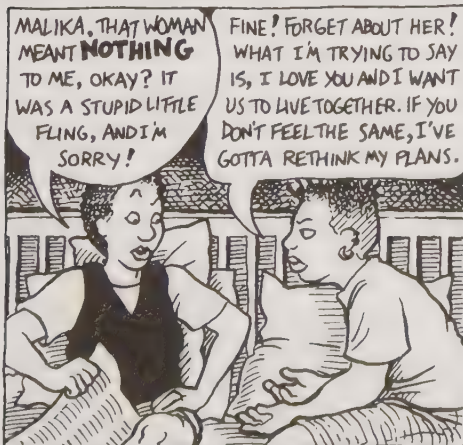


A TIP O' THE NIB TO BARBARA SMITH



I GUESS PEOPLE CAN GRASP THE CONCEPT BETTER IF YOU CALL IT 'STRESS' INSTEAD OF 'OPPRESSION.'

GINGER, WILL YOU STOP CHANGING THE SUBJECT? MY FLIGHT'S LEAVING SOON AND I WANT TO KNOW: ARE YOU COMMITTED TO THIS RELATIONSHIP OR NOT?



MALIKA. THAT WOMAN MEANT **NOTHING** TO ME, OKAY? IT WAS A STUPID LITTLE FLING, AND I'M SORRY!

FINE? FORGET ABOUT HER! WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS, I LOVE YOU AND I WANT US TO LIVE TOGETHER. IF YOU DON'T FEEL THE SAME, I'VE GOTTA RETHINK MY PLANS.



**L-LIVE** TOGETHER? JEEZ, BABE... YOU KNOW HOW IMPORTANT MY WORK IS TO ME RIGHT NOW. I'M TOTALLY WRAPPED UP IN MY DISSERTATION! COULDN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS LATER?

WE DON'T HAVE TO. THAT'S ALL I NEED TO HEAR.



SWEETIE, ALL I MEANT WAS, I CAN'T MOVE TO SAN FRANCISCO BECAUSE OF SCHOOL. AND YOU CAN'T MOVE HERE BECAUSE, UM, LIKE, THERE'S NO ROOM FOR ANY OF YOUR STUFF!

THAT'S FOR DAMN SURE. WILL DRIVING ME TO THE AIRPORT BE TOO MUCH **STRESS** FOR YOU OR SHOULD I TAKE THE BUS?



# Ginger snaps

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

Mo  
VISITS  
OUR  
HARRIED  
HOUSEMATES  
ON THE EVE  
OF THEIR  
JOURNEY  
TO THE  
GAY GAMES  
AND  
STONEWALL  
25.

191

... THEN SHE FLEW BACK TO  
FRISCO AND TOLD ME NOT  
TO BOTHER CALLING UNTIL  
I KNEW WHAT I WANTED.

JEEZ!



OKAY, SO YOU JUST FILL THE  
BOWL TO THE TOP WITH  
CHOW ONCE A DAY AFTER  
THE EVENING WALK.

GOT IT. I'LL TAKE  
GOOD CARE OF HER.  
SO GINGER, WHAT  
DO YOU WANT?



IF I KNEW  
THAT, I WOULDN'T  
HAVE A  
**PROBLEM**,  
WOULD I?

THE WASHER'S ALL YOURS,  
GINGER. MO, COME UP-  
STAIRS AND HELP ME  
PACK.



WHAT'S YOUR GOAL THIS  
TIME? YOU GONNA TRY  
AND KISS A WOMAN FROM  
EVERY COMPETING COUN-  
TRY AT THE GAMES?

NAH. I'M TAKING A MORE  
THEMATIC APPROACH TO  
THIS EVENT. I HOPE TO  
**GROPE** AN ATHLETE  
FROM EACH SPORT...

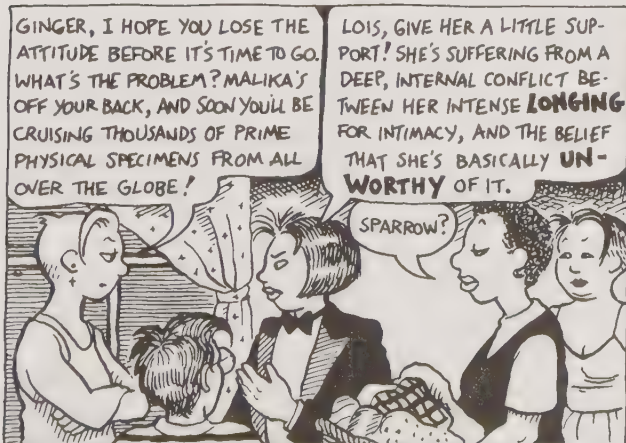
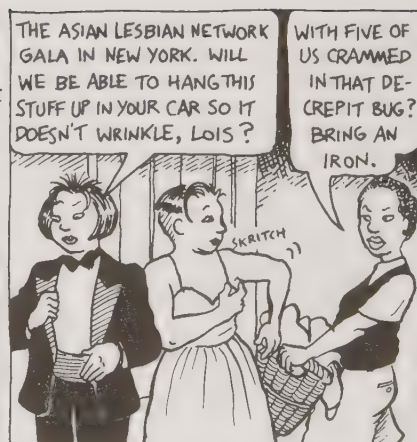
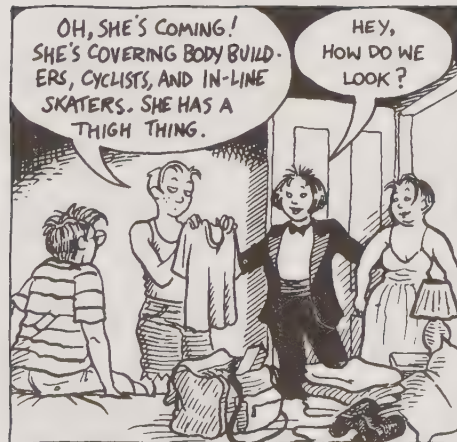


AND GO FOR THE GOLD WITH  
A MARATHON RUNNER, A  
WATERPOLO PLAYER, A DIVER,  
AND A WRESTLER.

I GUESS  
SONYA'S  
NOT GOING  
WITH YOU  
THEN.





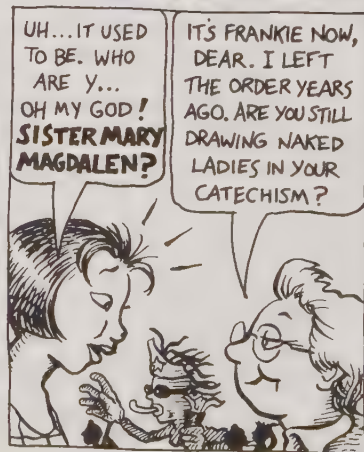
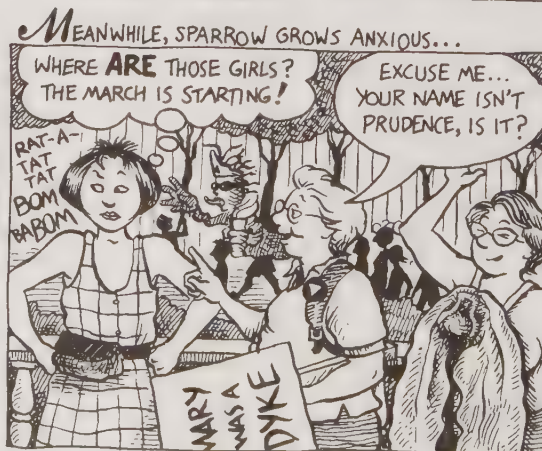
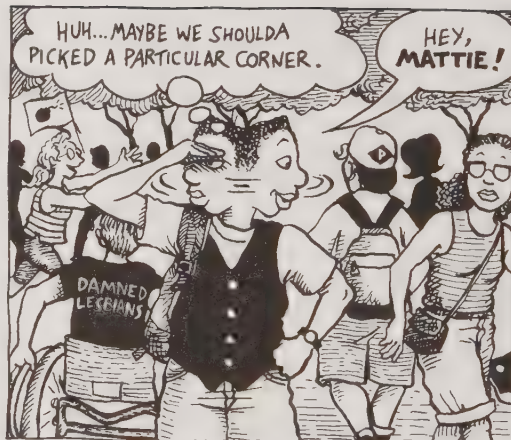


# Lost in Paradise

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

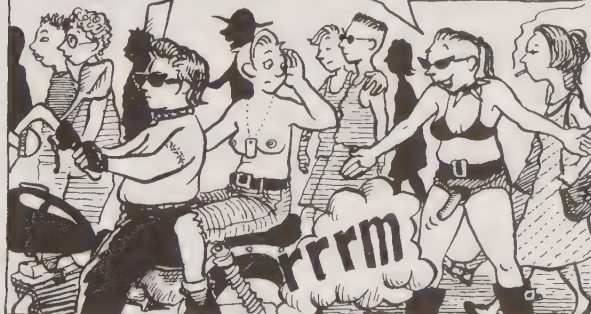
AFTER SPENDING THE DAY APART IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A WIDER SAMPLING OF NEW YORK CITY'S DIZZYING **GLUT** OF QUEER CULTURAL AND ATHLETIC EVENTS, GINGER, LOIS, SPARROW AND JUNE HAVE PLANNED TO **RENDEZVOUS** AT THE **INTERNATIONAL DYKE MARCH**.

192





AT 35th ST... **LOIS?!** OMIGOD! I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU FOR YEARS! IT'S ME, MELISSA, YOUR FRESHMAN ROOMMATE! REMEMBER? I WAS SECRETARY OF THE CAMPUS CHAPTER OF YOUNG AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM?



**9** EX-LOVERS, **6** TRICKS,  
**4** COLLEGE ALUMNAE, **2**  
GIRL SCOUT TROOP LEADERS,  
**2** RECOVERING DRINKING  
BUDDIES, **3** CIVILLY  
DISOBEDIENT CELLMATES,  
**2** MINOR CELEBRITIES,  
**4** PERSONAE NON GRATAE,  
**1** THIRD-GRADE CLASS-  
MATE AND **87** CASUAL  
ACQUAINTANCES  
LATER...

GREAT! STILL NO SIGN OF THEM AND THE MARCH IS OVER. THIS IS THE LAST TIME I MAKE PLANS WITH THOSE DITZES.

SO WHERE'S THIS "GIRLFRIEND" YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO MEET? IF YOU DIDN'T WANT TO COME TO THE DANCE WITH ME, JUNE, YOU COULD'VE JUST SAID SO.

UH...

I AM SAFE, I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, AND MY FRIENDS HAVE NOT ABANDONED ME. I AM SAFE, I CAN TAKE CARE OF MY...

SO LOIS, YOU WANNA COME WATCH TRISTAN GET HER TONGUE PIERCED?

YEAH, SURE. LOOKS LIKE MY FRIENDS BAILED ON ME. WHICH ONE'S TRISTAN?

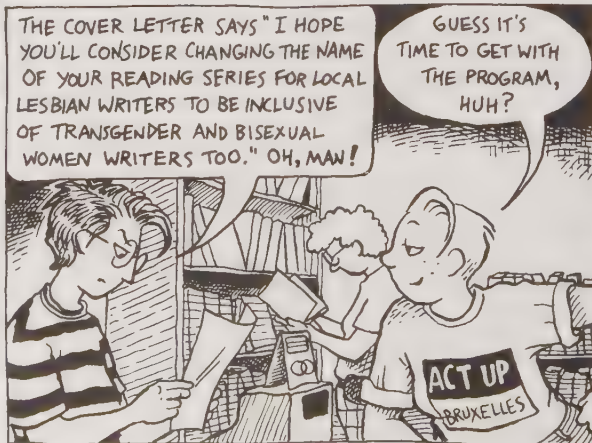


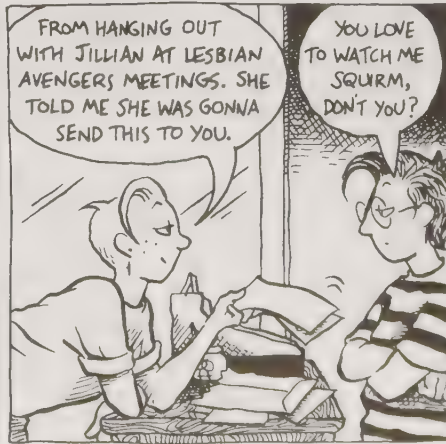
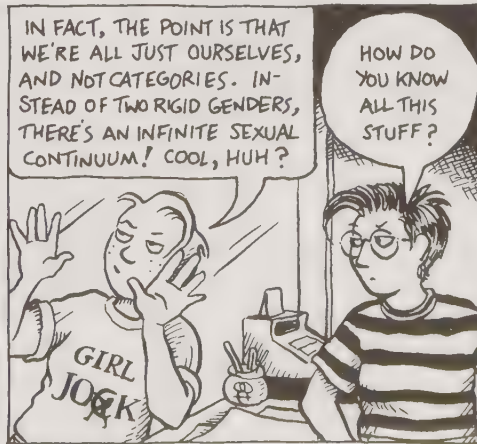
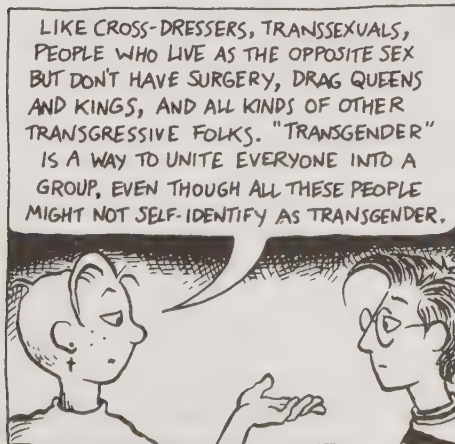
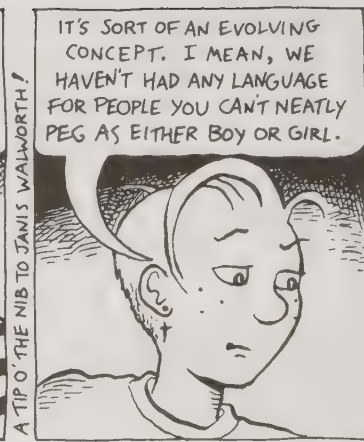


# Au Courant

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

193





# LIME LIGHT

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

THANK YOU, JILLIAN, FOR THAT FASCINATING, UH, TRANSSEXUAL VERSION OF THE OEDIPUS LEGEND, "OEDIPAL COMPLEX." THANKS ALSO TO MIKO TAKAGI AND DEIRDRE TRIVELPIECE FOR SHARING THEIR WORK WITH US TONIGHT, AND TO OUR ASL INTERPRETER, JO PALMER.



A TIP-O-THE NIB TO LYNETTE REEP.

AND THANKS TO ALL OF YOU FOR COMING OUT TO SUPPORT OUR LOCAL AUTHORS, AND MAKING THIS FIRST EVENT IN OUR "MADWIMMIN READ" SERIES A SUCCESS. PLEASE STICK AROUND FOR REFRESHMENTS, AND COME BACK AGAIN NEXT MONTH.



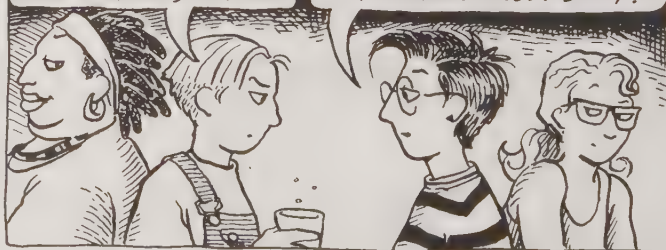
HUH! YOU PULLED IT OFF! NICE WORK, MO. AND LOOK AT ALL THESE PEOPLE! I BETTER GET UP TO THE REGISTER. YOU GO SCHMOOZE.

VERY IMPRESSIVE. NO ONE WOULD EVER SUSPECT YOU WERE A SHY PERSON, THE WAY YOU RAN THE SHOW.

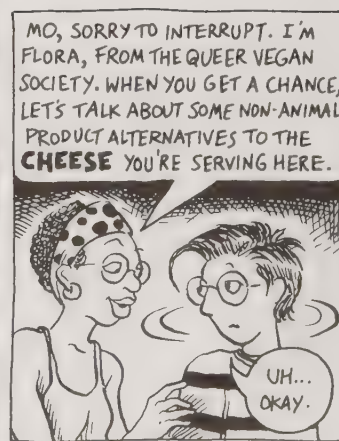
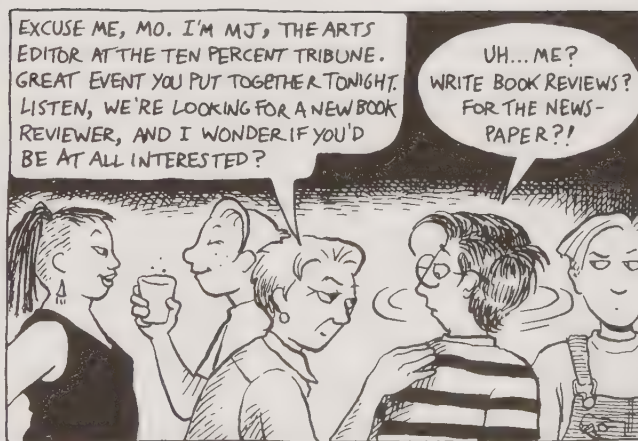


EXCUSE ME. I JUST NEED TO SAY I WAS REALLY SHOCKED THAT YOU LET A **MAN** READ HERE TONIGHT. MEN HAVE ACCESS TO THE WHOLE WORLD. WHY SHOULD WE SHARE OUR MEAGER RESOURCES WITH THEM?

UH... WELL, FIRST OF ALL, HE'S NOT A MAN, HE'S A LESBIAN. I MEAN, **SHE'S** A LESBIAN. AND SECOND, I WANT THIS SERIES TO BE INCLUSIVE, AND NOT SOME PRIVATE CLUB. I MEAN, WHO AM I TO QUESTION SOMEONE ELSE'S IDENTITY?



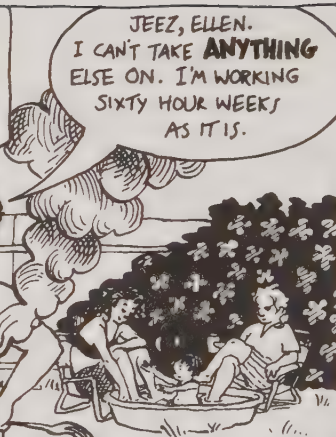
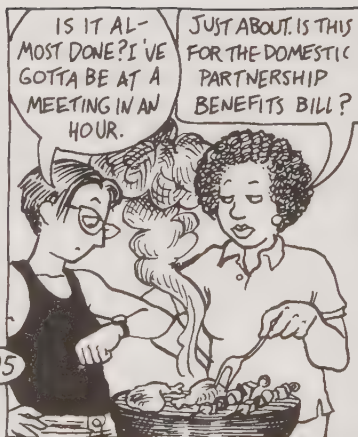




# NO PICNIC

© 1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

195



IT WOULD TAKE FIVE  
MINUTES! YOU COULD  
BRING RAFAEL UP TO  
THE PODIUM WITH YOU!  
IT'LL BE **PERFECT!**



COME ON! THE DOMESTIC  
PARTNERS REGISTRY IS A  
CRITICAL STEP TOWARDS  
GETTING OUR RELATION-  
SHIPS RECOGNIZED!



DID I TELL YOU I MIGHT  
BE GOING UP AGAINST THE  
UNION CARBUNCLE CHEM-  
ICAL CORPORATION? WE  
FOUND A L.U.S.T. AT THEIR  
SOUTH END PLANT, AND I  
THINK IT'S CONNECTED TO  
THE HIGH CANCER RATE  
OVER THERE.



LEAKY UNDER-  
GROUND STORAGE  
TANK. IT'S CON-  
TAMINATING THE  
GROUND WATER.



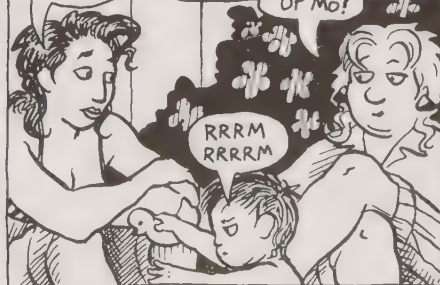
I **KNOW** HER JOB'S IMPORTANT, BUT I'M NOT SURE I CAN GO ON LIKE THIS! SHE'S HARDLY EVER HOME! I MIGHT AS WELL BE A SINGLE PARENT!

HUH. JUST BEGLAD YOU'RE NOT MARRIED TO MS. **PUBLIC SERVANT** OVER THERE.

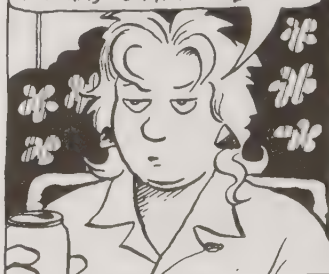


WHAT'S GOING ON? I THOUGHT YOU TWO WERE SO HAPPY!

I DUNNO. FOR A LONG TIME I FELT REALLY ATTRACTED TO HOW DRIVEN AND HIGH-POWERED SHE IS. I MEAN, SHE'S THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF ME!



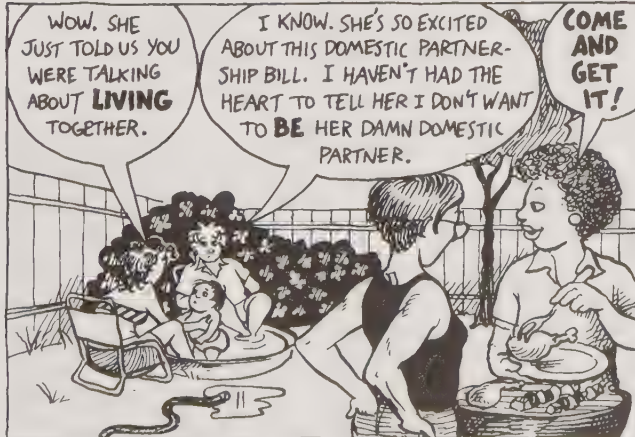
BUT POLITICS IS HER **LIFE**. THE CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY PROJECTS, BOARD MEETINGS, FUND-RAISING... I FEEL LIKE I'M JUST ANOTHER COMMITMENT SHE HAS TO FIND TIME FOR.



WOW. SHE JUST TOLD US YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT **LIVING** TOGETHER.

I KNOW. SHE'S SO EXCITED ABOUT THIS DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP BILL. I HAVEN'T HAD THE HEART TO TELL HER I DON'T WANT TO **BE** HER DAMN DOMESTIC PARTNER.

**COME AND GET IT!**

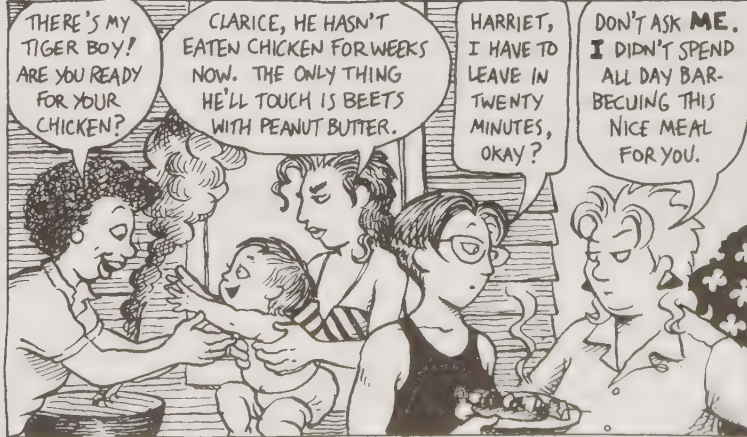


THERE'S MY TIGER BOY! ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR CHICKEN?

CLARICE, HE HASN'T EATEN CHICKEN FOR WEEKS NOW. THE ONLY THING HE'LL TOUCH IS BEETS WITH PEANUT BUTTER.

HARRIET, I HAVE TO LEAVE IN TWENTY MINUTES, OKAY?

DON'T ASK **ME**. I DIDN'T SPEND ALL DAY BAR-BECUING THIS NICE MEAL FOR YOU.





# let them eat cake

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

196

*B*UZZED ON CAKE AND ICE CREAM, SEVERAL GUESTS AT RAFAEL'S FIRST BIRTHDAY PARTY HAVE REMAINED IN THE KITCHEN FOR SOME LIVELY DEBATE.



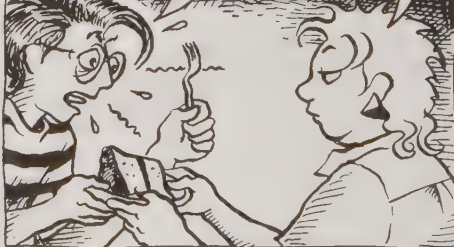
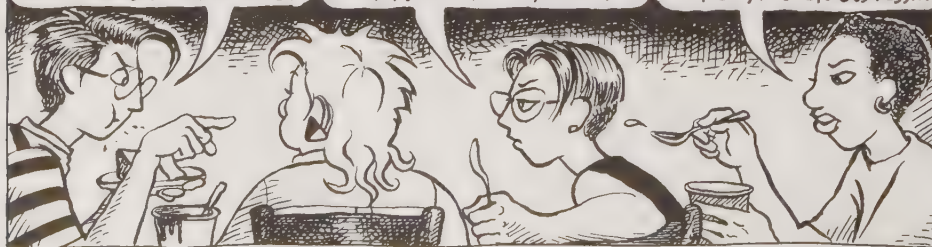
THE QUESTION IS, WOULD THESE LOG CABIN CLUB TYPES EVER HAVE COME OUT AT **ALL** IF **LEFTIST** QUEERS HADN'T BEEN FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS IN THE STREETS FOR THE PAST **25 YEARS**? I THINK **NOT**.

I DUNNO, MO. STREET ACTIVISTS AND DYKES ON BIKES ARE GREAT, BUT IT TAKES ALL KINDS! IF SOME STARCHED, STRAIGHT-ACTING GAY MEN AND LESBIANS WANT TO SUCK UP TO THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, IT CAN ONLY HELP!

YEAH... **HELP THEM**. THEY'LL SELL THE **REST** OF US DOWN THE RIVER JUST TO GET THEIR WINGTIPS IN THE DOOR! THEY'RE ANTI-CHOICE, ANTI-AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, PRO-BIG BUSINESS...

THEY PROBABLY **EAT VEAL**! THEY PROBABLY DON'T **RECYCLE**! THEY PROBABLY HAVE **WET DREAMS** ABOUT SKINNYDIPPING AT THE BOHEMIAN GROVE WITH **GEORGE WILL**!

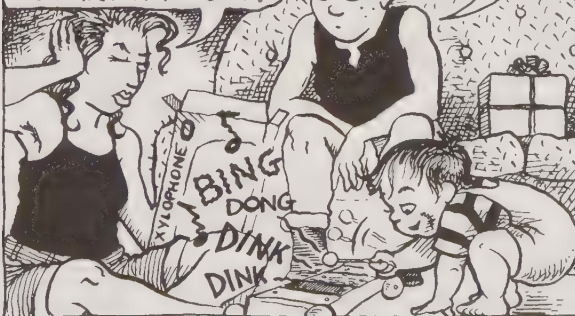
OKAY, MO. I THINK YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH ICING.



MEANWHILE, IN THE LIVING ROOM...

THANKS, LOIS. D'YOU THINK YOU COULD'VE FOUND A MORE IRRITATING GIFT?

WELL, IT WAS THIS OR THE TALKING STUFFED **BARNEY**.



LET'S SEE WHAT YOUR FOLKS SENT, BABE! SMELLS LIKE MONEY.

RAFFI, NO! DON'T BONK STELLA! SORRY, GLORIA.

IT'S OKAY. SO TONI, DID YOU COME OUT TO YOUR PARENTS YET?



NO... I WAS ALL READY TO, BUT THEN THE VATICAN MADE THEIR LITTLE PRONOUNCEMENT ABOUT HOW SAME SEX COUPLES SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO ADOPT OR USE ALTERNATIVE INSEMINATION. MY MOM'S SO POPE-CRAZY, I THOUGHT I'D WAIT TILL THINGS QUIETED DOWN.



HAVE A NICE WAIT.

A CHECK FOR RAFFI, A PHOTO OF THE NEIGHBORS' SON, JULIO, FOR YOU.

HUH. JULIO LOOKS A LITTLE LIGHT IN THE LOAFERS TO ME.



THE KITCHEN CREW IS STARTING TO CRASH...

SO WHAT MAKES SOME GAY PEOPLE TURN OUT TO BE REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVISTS, AND OTHERS TURN OUT TO BE SNIVELING COLLABORATIONISTS?

THE AMOUNT OF REFINED SUGAR THEIR MOTHERS ATE WHILE THEY WERE IN THE WOMB?

SOMEONE STOP ME. I CAN SEE BOB DOLE'S FACE IN THE BUTTER PECAN.



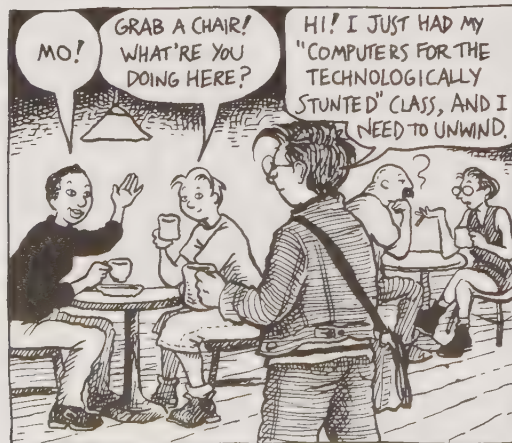
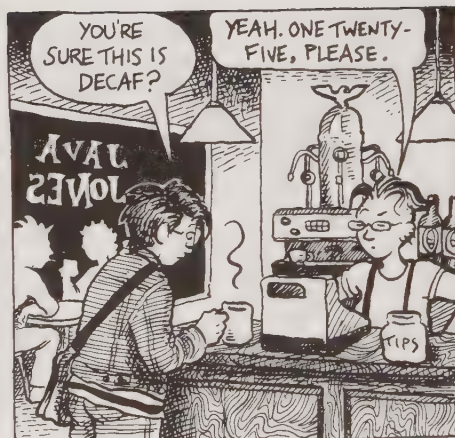


# virtual interface

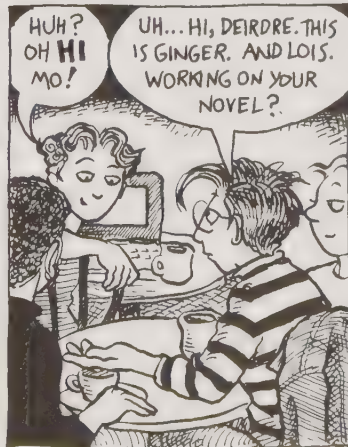
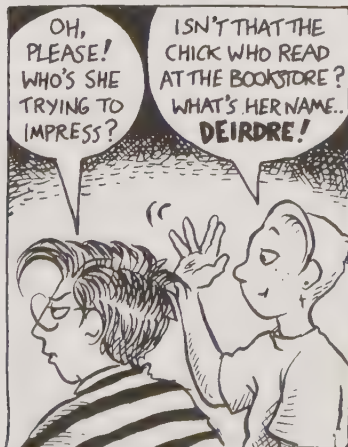
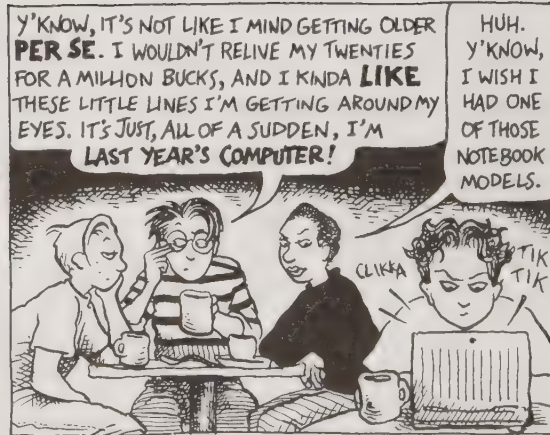
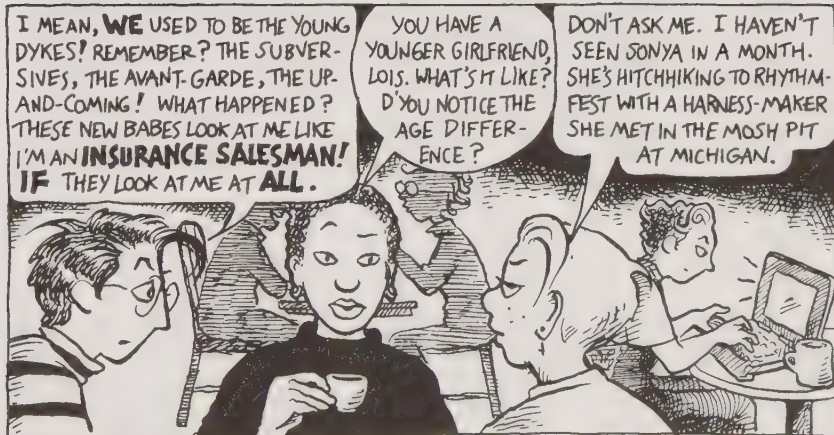
OUR  
HEROINE  
VENTURES  
INTO  
A  
LOCAL  
CAFFEINE  
DEN.

197

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL







# BUFFED

© 1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

198

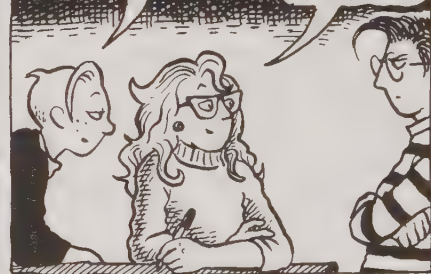
ALL READY FOR YOUR BIG NIGHT, MO? D'YOU NEED ANY POINTERS? WANT ME TO COME OVER AND TAKE A PICTURE OF YOU TWO BEFORE YOU GO OUT?

OH, MY GOD, YOU HAVE A DATE?

NO, I DO **NOT** HAVE A DATE. UH...AND IF I **DID**, I WOULD RESENT THAT TONE OF VOICE.

SHE'S GOING TO THE MOVIES WITH DEIRDRE, ONE OF THE WRITERS WHO READ HERE LAST MONTH.

REALLY! I LIKED HER. SHE WAS SMART. AND NOT UN-ATTRACTIVE, AS I RECALL.



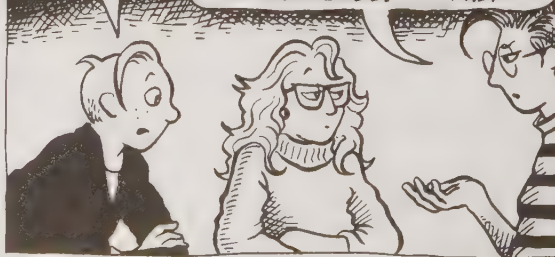
SO MO, ARE YOU GONNA PUT OUT?

**LOIS!** THIS ISN'T A DATE! SHE JUST WANTS TO MEET MORE PEOPLE. AND IF IT **WAS** A DATE, I WOULD CERTAINLY **NOT** HAVE SEX WITH HER THE FIRST TIME WE WENT OUT!



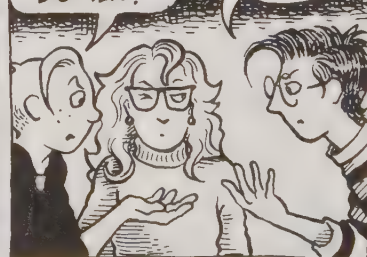
WHOA! HAVE YOU SIGNED THE YOUTH FOR CHRIST "TRUE LOVE WAITS" CHASTITY PLEDGE?

NO, IT'S JUST...I'VE **DONE** THE U-HAUL SCENE, Y'KNOW? I'M TIRED OF GOING TO BED WITH A DATE AND WAKING UP WITH A DOMESTIC PARTNER. FROM NOW ON I'M GONNA WAIT UNTIL I KNOW THIS IS WHO I WANT TO BE WITH BEFORE I **SLEEP** WITH HER.

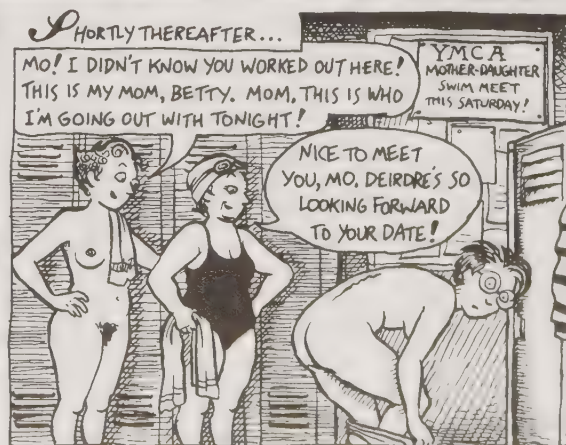
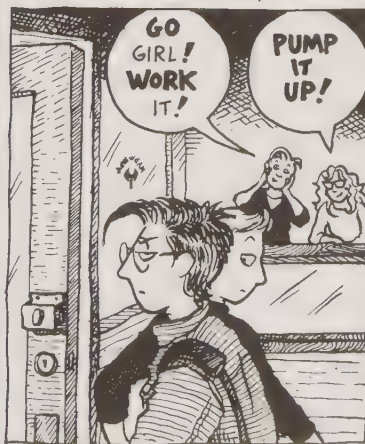
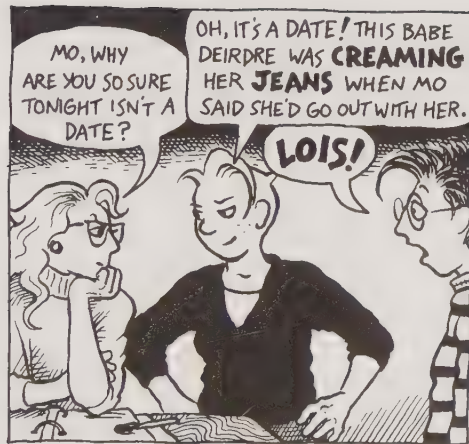


WHAT KIND OF TWISTED LOGIC IS THAT? HOW D'YOU KNOW YOU WANNA **BE** WITH HER UNLESS YOU **DO** HER?

LOIS, I'M NOT LIKE YOU. IF I HAVE SEX, I FALL IN LOVE. IT'S A GENETIC DEFECT.









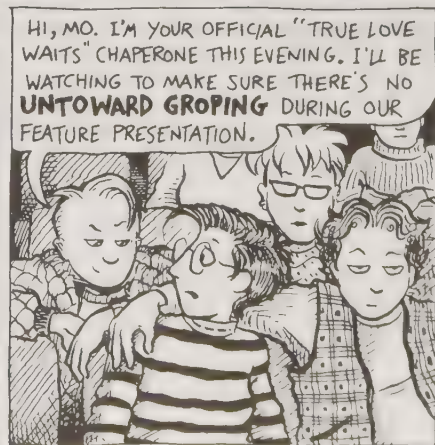
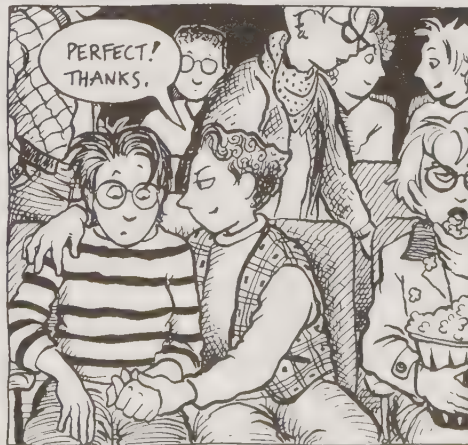
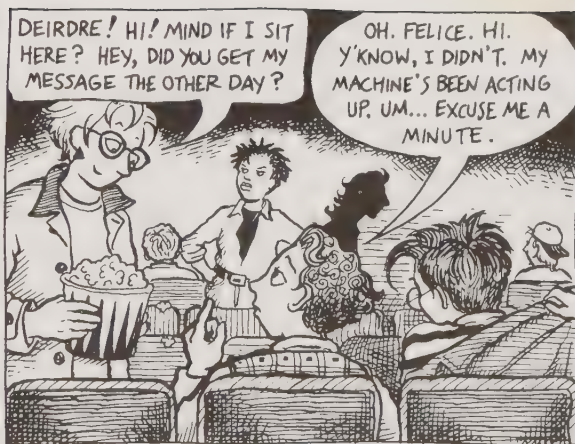
# Mystery Date

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

IS IT OR ISN'T IT? DESPITE STRONG CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE, OUR HEROINE REMAINS UNCONVINCED THAT SHE IS INDEED ON A DATE.

199





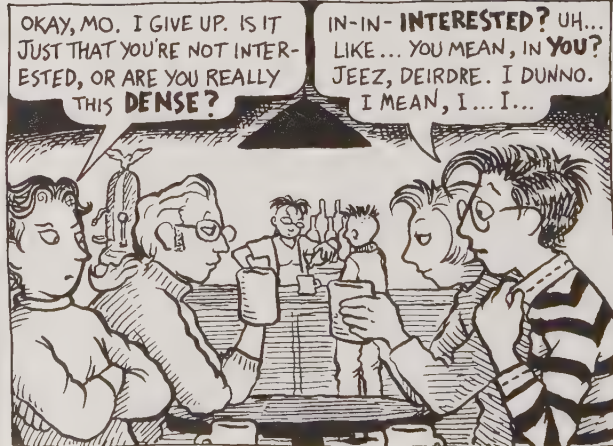
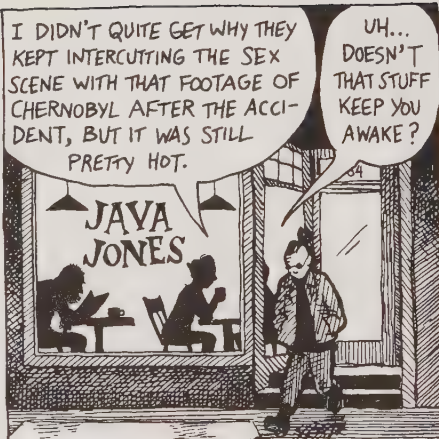


# from the sublimation to the ridiculous

AFTER AN  
EVENING OF  
EXPERIMENTAL  
LESBIAN  
FILM,  
MO AND  
DEIRDRE'S  
QUASI-DATE  
CONTINUES  
OVER COFFEE.

200

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

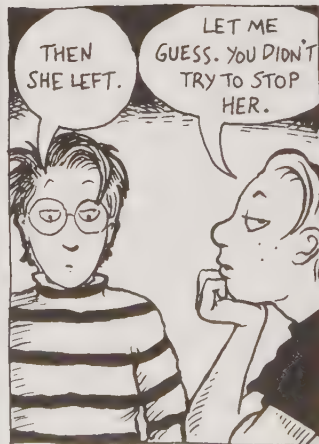
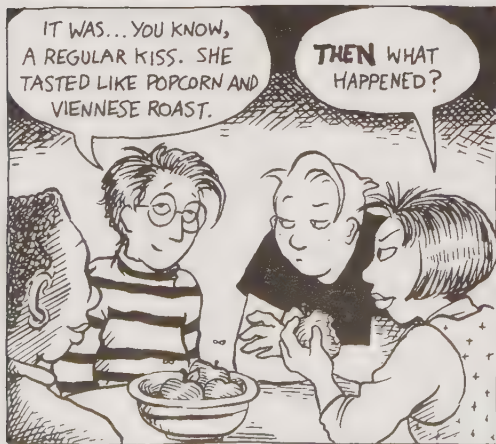
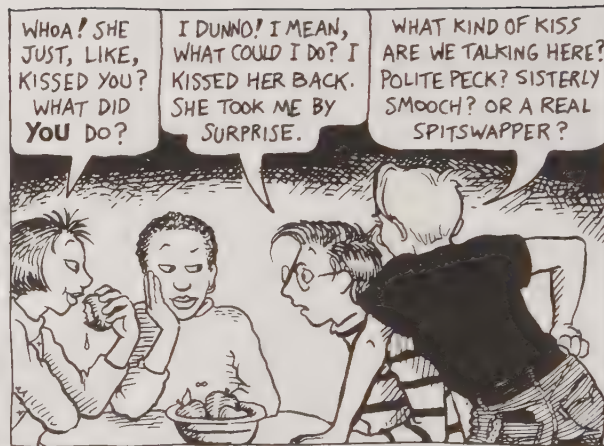
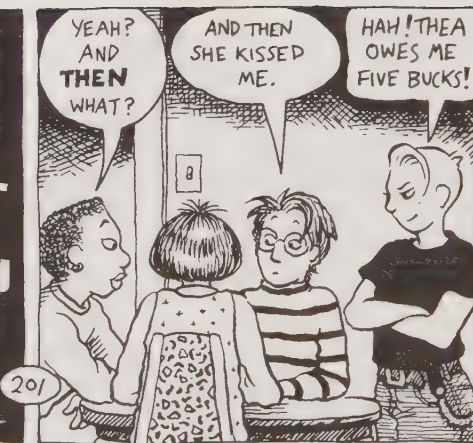






# the Fatalist

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL





I'M LOOKING AT HOW THE HYPERSEXUALIZED PERSONAE OF BLACK WOMEN AND LESBIANS IN THE MALE LITERARY CANON CONTRAST WITH OUR ACTUAL EXPERIENCES OF DESIRE, FOCUSING ON INTERSUBJECTIVE MODALITIES OF **LESBIAN IMPOTENCE**.

YOU KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, MO? YOU'RE AFRAID OF LETTING ANYTHING **GOOD** HAPPEN.

OF COURSE I AM! AS SOON AS SOMETHING GOOD HAPPENS, SOMETHING **BAD** IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER!

ARE YOU STILL IN THERAPY? AND WHAT ABOUT THIS DEIRDRE? IS SHE PRE-SHRUNK?

JEEZIZ, SPARROW! IT WAS OUR FIRST DATE! I DIDN'T TAKE HER MENTAL HEALTH HISTORY!

WELL DON'T COME CRYING TO ME WHEN YOU FIND OUT SHE STILL THINKS SHE HAD A HAPPY CHILDHOOD.

MO, THAT WAS JEZANNA ON THE PHONE. SHE WANTS US TO COME OVER TO THE BOOKSTORE TONIGHT. RIGHT NOW, IF WE CAN.

WHAT'S WRONG?!

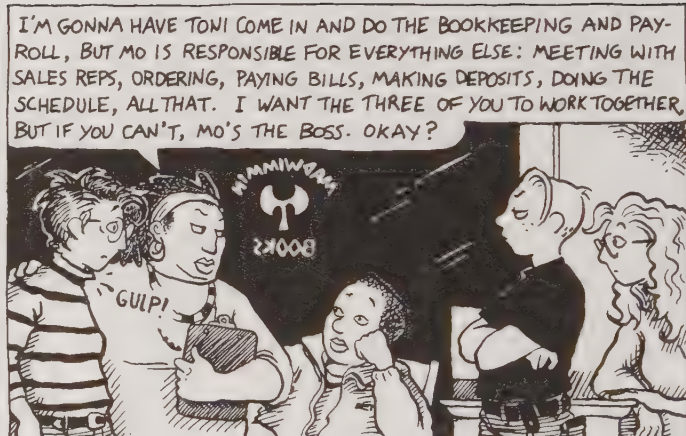
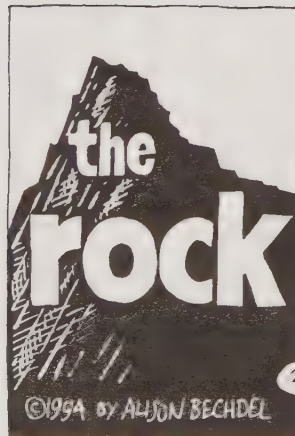
HER MOM IS REALLY SICK, SO SHE HAS TO FLY HOME. SHE WANTS TO GO OVER STUFF AT WORK WITH US BEFORE HER FLIGHT LEAVES.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HER MOTHER? DID SHE SAY?

NO. SHE SOUNDED PRETTY UPSET, THOUGH.

MAYBE I SHOULD COME WITH YOU, IN CASE SHE NEEDS TO TALK. I MEAN, MY MOM'S BEEN SICK A LOT. DO YOU THINK SHE'D MIND?

PROBABLY. BUT IT'S WORTH A TRY. LET'S GO.





HI, TONI. I JUST FOUND OUT MY MOTHER HAS BREAST CANCER, AND I'M FLYING OUT TO BE WITH HER TOMORROW. COME ON, LET'S GO OVER THE BOOKS. I HAVE A LOT TO DO TONIGHT.



**BREAST CANCER?! HOLD ON, JEZ! LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS, ARE YOU OKAY?**

**YES, I AM OKAY! I'M NOT THE ONE WHO'S SICK. WHY ARE YOU ALL UP IN MY FACE? AND WHAT ARE YOU TWO EVEN DOING HERE? YOU DON'T WORK FOR ME!**



WE'RE YOUR **FRIENDS**. THIS IS WHAT **FRIENDS DO**.

LISTEN. MY MOM'S HAD CANCER FOR FIVE YEARS NOW. I CAN HELP YOU DEAL WITH THIS IF YOU WANT TO TALK.

THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO SAY! I TOLD HER A THOUSAND TIMES, "**MAMA! YOU NEED TO GET A MAMMOGRAM!**" I EVEN MADE APPOINTMENTS! DID SHE KEEP THEM? NO, SHE DID NOT!



ONE DAY SHE NOTICED A LUMP! DID SHE **TELL** ANYONE? NO, SHE DID NOT! DIDN'T WANT TO BE ANY **TROUBLE!** THEY ONLY FOUND IT SIX MONTHS LATER WHEN MY COUSIN DRAGGED HER IN FOR A PHYSICAL!



YOU'RE ANGRY. THAT'S GOOD. STAY WITH YOUR FEELINGS.

HEY! IF YOU THINK I'M GONNA BREAK DOWN BAWLING SO YOU CAN ALL MAKE A FUSS, YOU GOT ANOTHER THINK COMING. LET'S GO, TONI!



HOW BAD IS IT?

THEY DON'T KNOW YET. OR SHE JUST WON'T SAY.

UNDERNEATH THE ATTITUDE, SHE'S REALLY SCARED.



YEAH, SHE IS IN SO MUCH **DENIAL**. COME ON, LET'S GET THESE BOOKS RE-ALPHABETIZED!



# minding the store

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

RIGHT.... OKAY.... WELL LISTEN, I'M REALLY GLAD YOUR MOM MADE IT THROUGH THE SURGERY ALL RIGHT. HANG IN THERE, JEZ, AND I'LL TALK TO YOU TOMORROW.... **YES**, THE STORE IS **FINE**. I'VE GOT EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL. DON'T WORRY! OKAY, BYE.



EXCUSE ME. I'M LOOKING FOR A COPY OF THAT NEW BOOK, "STRANGE JUSTICE: THE SELLING OF CLARENCE THOMAS."

SURE!  
WE JUST GOT A SHIPMENT IN THIS MORNING. LEMME GET YOU ONE.



HEY, MO. CHECK IT OUT, THEY SENT US THE **WRONG** NEW CLARENCE THOMAS BOOK. WE HAVE THIRTY COPIES HERE OF THE WACKO ONE BY SENATOR DANFORTH!

HOW'D **THAT** HAPPEN? SHIT! I'VE GOT A CUSTOMER OUT THERE WAITING FOR THE RIGHT ONE!



ISN'T THERE A DISPLAY COPY IN THE WINDOW? SELL THAT.

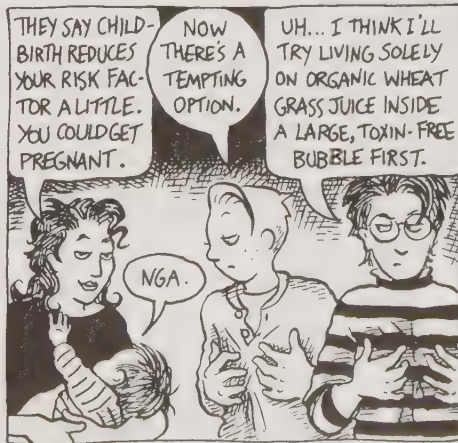
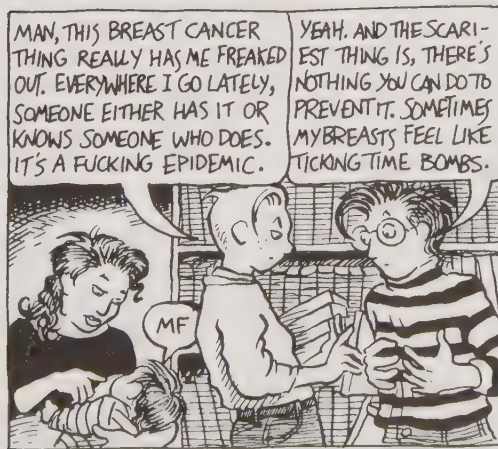
GOOD THINKING!



AAUGH!



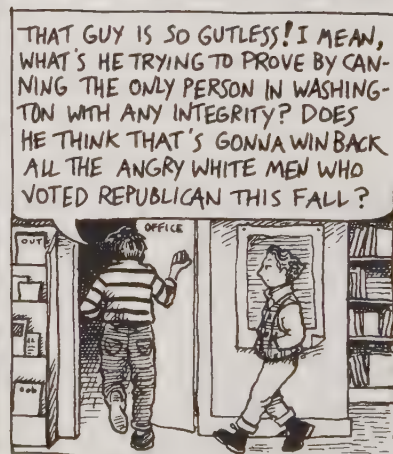




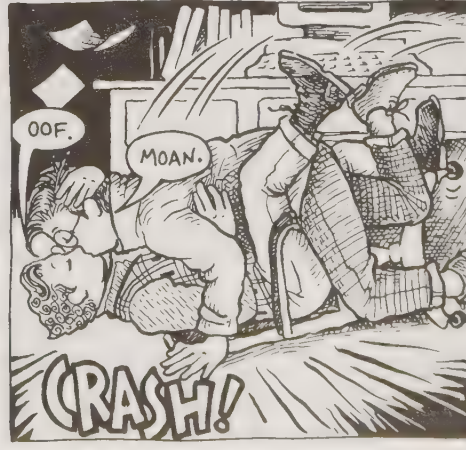
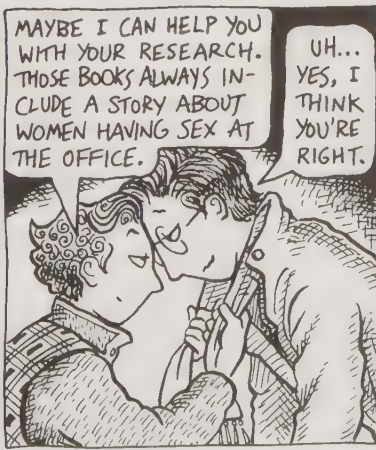
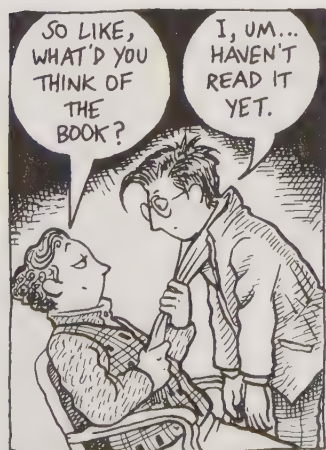
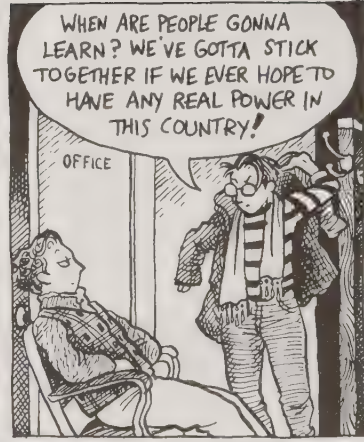
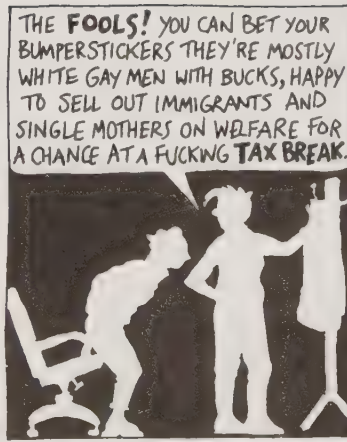
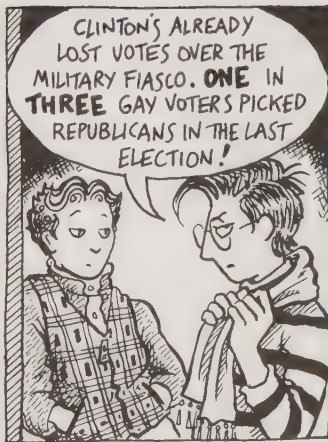
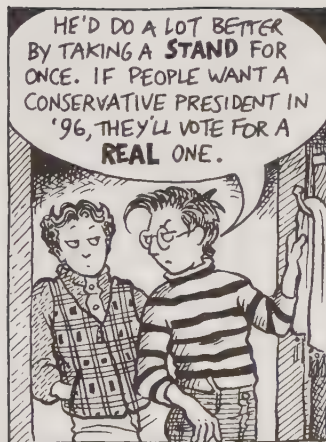
# Trouble

©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

204









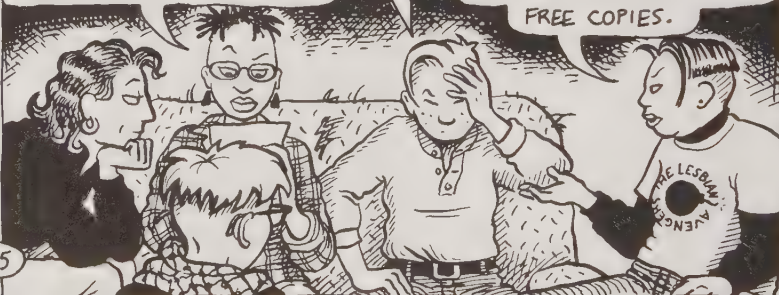
©1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

205

...THEN AFTER AN UPDATE FROM THE FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE, LOIS IS GONNA READ THE DRAFT OF THE FACT SHEET WE'LL BE PASSING OUT AT THE ACTION.

OH, NO. I LEFT IT AT WORK!

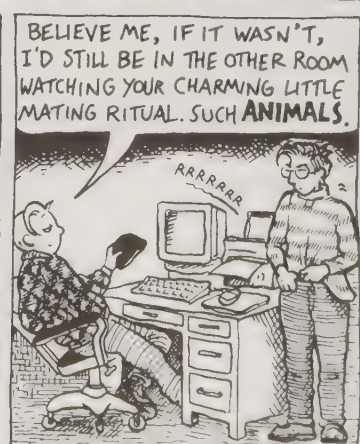
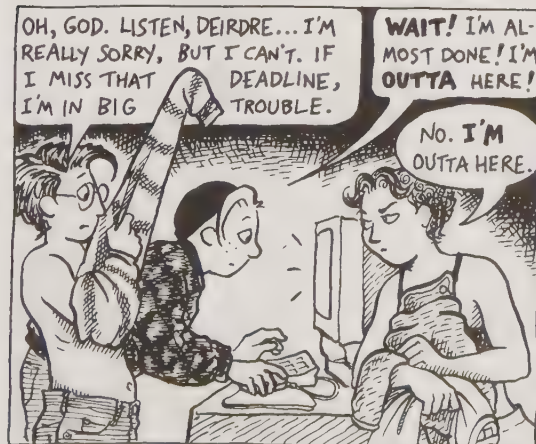
WE HAFTA FINALIZE THAT THING TONIGHT. TOMORROW'S MY LAST DAY TEMPING AT THE LAW FIRM AND I DON'T KNOW WHERE ELSE I CAN SCAM FREE COPIES.



MEANWHILE, AT THE BOOKSTORE...







# the nightly grind

©1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL

206

RAFAEL!  
MAMA HASN'T  
SEEN YOU  
IN TWO  
DAYS!

I WAS JUST PUTTING HIM TO BED. I  
THOUGHT HE'D NAP AT MADWIMMIN WHILE  
I DID THE PAYROLL, BUT LOIS GOT HIM TOO  
WORKED UP. THEN LATER, GLORIA  
BROUGHT STELLA OVER TO PLAY.

HE CAN'T GO TO BED! IT'S  
ONLY SEVEN! I LEFT A TON  
OF WORK UNFINISHED JUST  
SO I'D GET TO SPEND SOME  
TIME WITH HIM!

TOO BAD.  
YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO  
WASTE YOUR EVENING  
SPENDING TIME  
WITH ME.

WHINE.

LOOK, I'M SORRY, YOU KNOW  
I'M UNDER A LOT OF PRES-  
SURE WITH THE UNION  
CARBUNCLE SUIT. HAS HE  
NURSED?

DON'T SAY THAT WORD! I TOLD  
YOU, HE'S FINALLY WEANED  
OFF THE BEDTIME FEEDING.  
I'M FREE! HAVEN'T YOU  
NOTICED, MY BREASTS ARE  
RETURNING TO  
THEIR NOR-  
MAL SIZE?

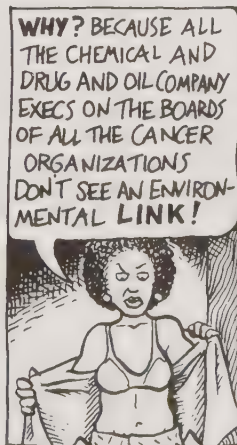
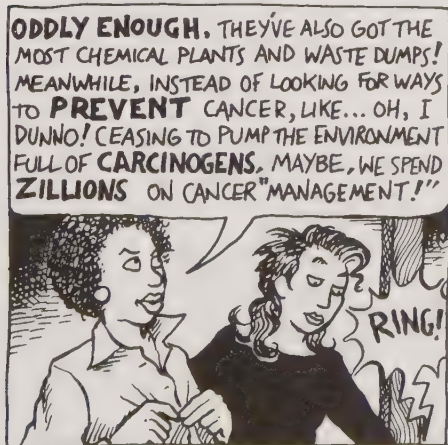
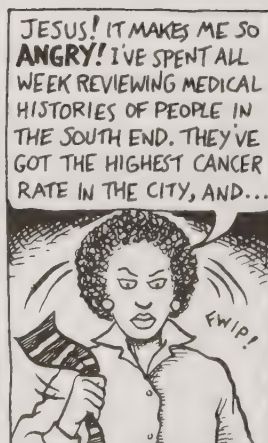
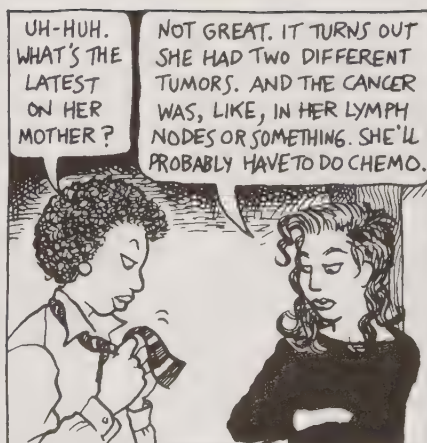
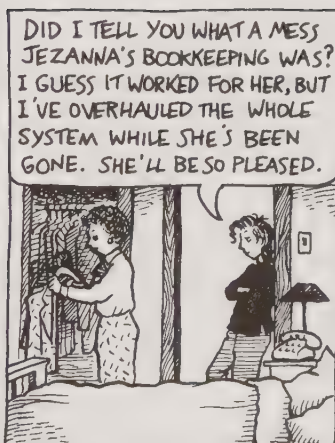
JEEZ,  
HE'S TOTALLY  
PASSED OUT.

GIVE HIM THAT  
TARANTULA. HE'LL  
CRY WITHOUT IT.

G'NIGHT,  
MONKEY  
BOY.

SLEEP TIGHT.  
TILL AROUND  
NOON, OKAY?





# unconsummate professionals

©1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE RENT CHECK BOUNCED! JEZANNA'S GONNA **FLIP!** WHILE SHE'S OFF TENDING HER SICK MOTHER, WE'RE RUNNING HER STORE INTO THE GROUND!

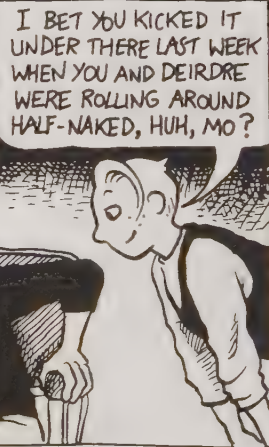
CALM **DOWN**, MO. I'LL FIGURE IT OUT. WHERE'S THE RECEIPT FOR THE DEPOSIT YOU MADE ON THE THIRTIETH?

UM... IT'S NOT THERE? JEEZ.

HEY, MO. THEY JUST DELIVERED THE **TRIBUNE** WITH YOUR REVIEW IN IT! CHECK IT OUT. "SAPPIC STROKE BOOK SATISFIES."

OFFICE

207



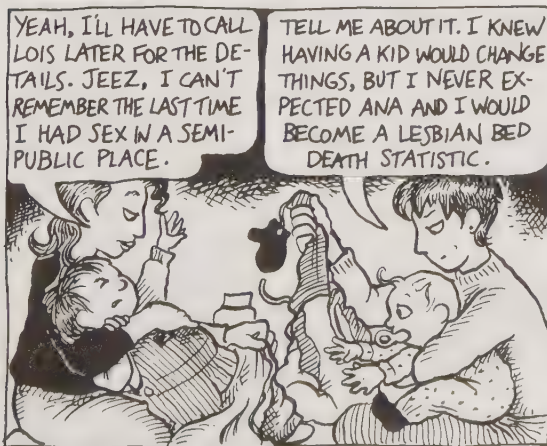
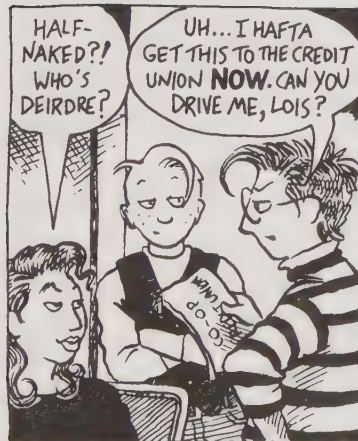
A TIP O' THE NIB TO AMY RUBIN

10% Tribune  
FRANK TO ARMEY:  
"NO PROBLEM,  
DICK. I MEAN,  
DICK."

10% Tribune  
DICK ARMEY TO  
BARNEY FRANK:  
"I'M SORRY I  
CALLED YOU  
BARNEY FAG."

CO-OP  
CREDIT UNION



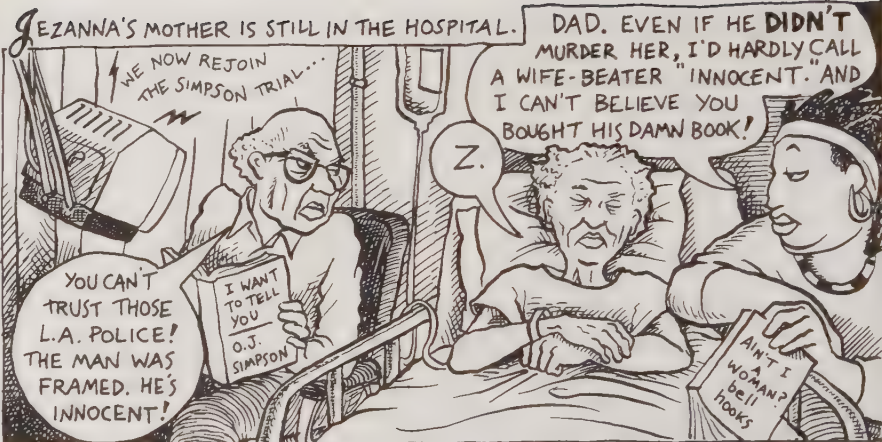


# the media event

©1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL

A  
BLEAK  
WINTER'S EVE  
FINDS OUR  
VARIOUS  
HEROINES  
ENGAGED IN  
AN EVEN  
BLEAKER  
COMMON  
PURSUIT.

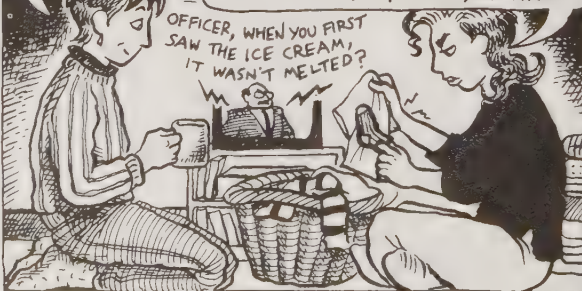
208



TONI AND GLORIA HAVE A LOT IN COMMON.

I THOUGHT YOU  
TWO HAD THIS  
GREAT SEX LIFE!

WE **USED** TO. I LOST INTEREST FOR  
A WHILE AFTER RAFFI WAS BORN,  
BUT LATELY I REALLY WANT IT AND  
CLARICE IS EITHER BUSY OR TIRED.





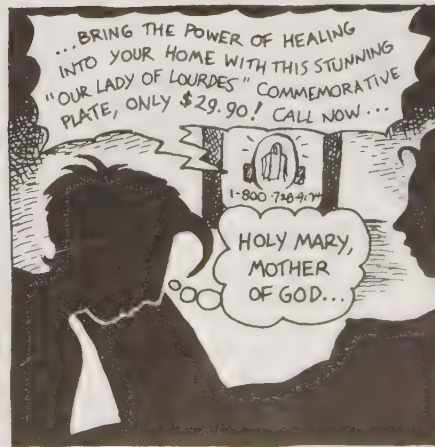
# CLARICE PLOTS LEGAL STRATEGIES.



# SPARROW IS HOLIER-THAN-HER-HOUSEMATES.



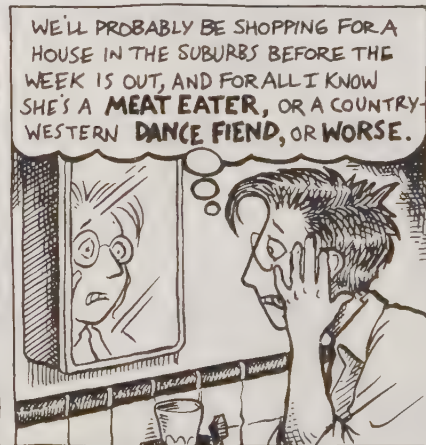
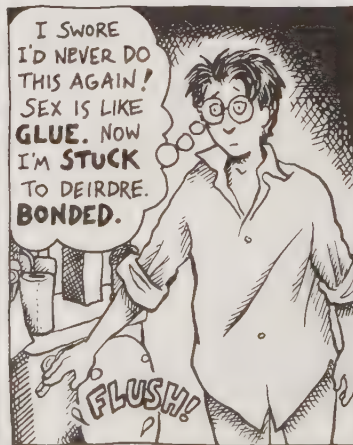
# AND MO IS ON THE VERGE OF LOSING HER CELIBACY!



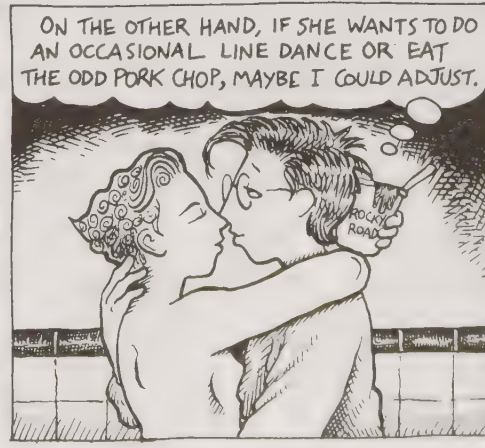
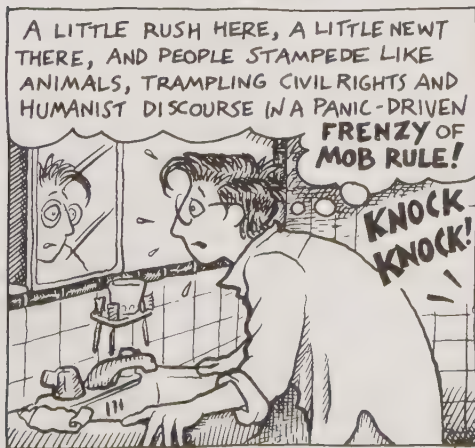
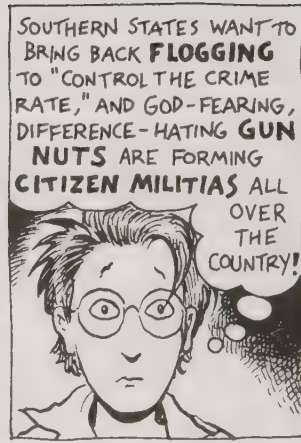
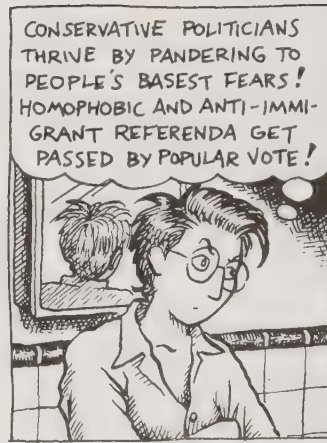
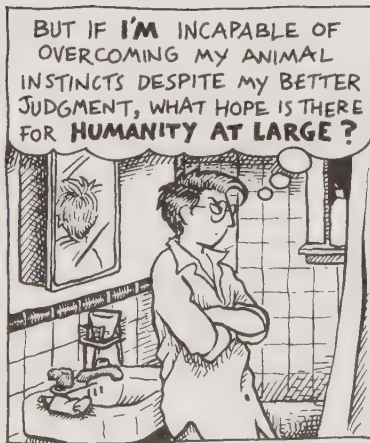
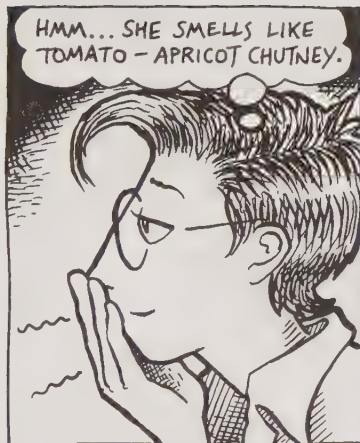
# post coitum tristis<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>a certain melancholy  
sometimes experienced  
after sex.

© 1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL







# Family Hour

©1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL

210

I DUNNO. IT'S NOT LIKE I DIDN'T **ENJOY** IT. I JUST WISH WE'D **WAITED** A LITTLE LONGER.

SO GINGER, WHY WAS MALIKA CALLING LAST NIGHT? CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU?

NO. SHE JUST WANTED TO GIVE ME HER NEW ADDRESS. SHE MOVED IN WITH THE WOMAN SHE MET A WEEK AFTER WE BROKE UP.

I MEAN, I KNOW IT SOUNDS VICTORIAN, BUT DON'T YOU THINK THERE'S SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR **HOLDING OUT?**

OH, GINGER. THAT MUST'VE HURT!

ACTUALLY, IT KIND OF HELPED. I DECIDED TO QUIT MAKING EXCUSES. THIS SUMMER I FINISH MY DISSERTATION OR **ELSE.**

THAT'LL SHOW HER. I BET THE NEW BABE ONLY HAS A MASTER'S DEGREE.

**DING DONG!**

THERE'S THE FOOD! I'LL GET IT.

**WURF!**

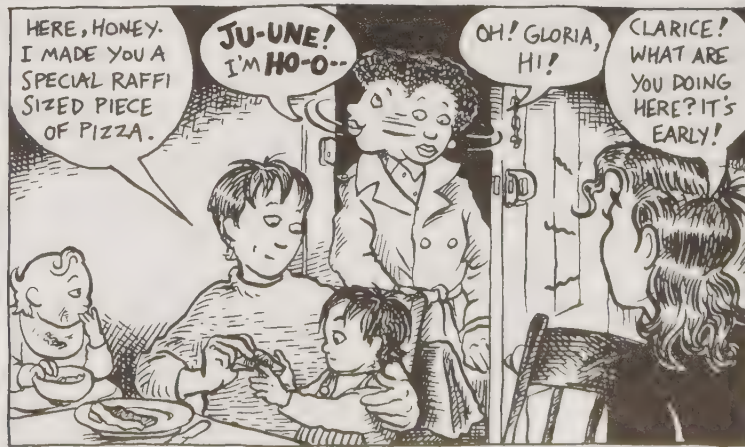
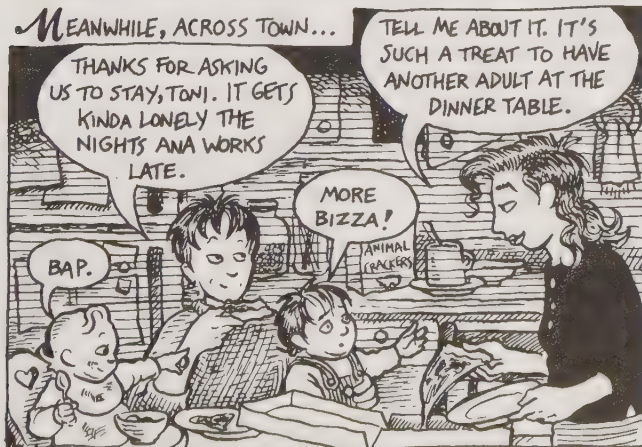
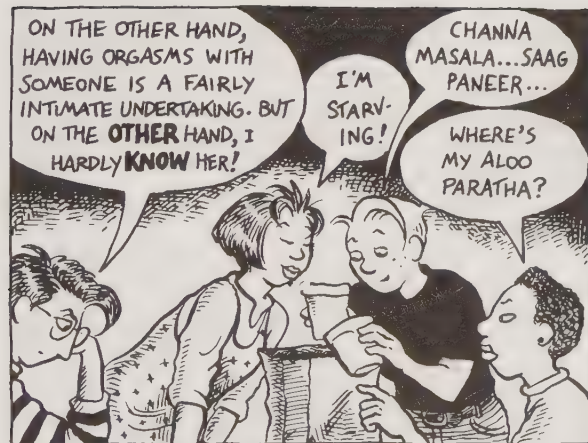
SO WHY **DIDN'T** I HOLD OUT? AM I SABOTAGING MYSELF? DO I REALLY FEAR INTIMACY?

Y'KNOW, I'M TIRED OF THIS **LIMBO!** I WANNA BE AN **ADULT,** GET ON WITH MY **LIFE,** MY **CAREER.**

YEAH. IT'D BE NICE TO HAVE A LITTLE **POWER,** TOO. DID I TELL YOU THE SHELTER DIRECTOR IS FINALLY LEAVING? I'M GONNA APPLY FOR HER JOB.

**ARF!**  
arararf  
woof!





# DRAGNET

©1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL

2/1

LOIS HAS PROMISED TO DO A BACKGROUND CHECK ON DEIRDRE FOR MO.

CURLY-HAIRED CHICK? YEAH... I DID HER ONCE A YEAR OR SO AGO. I GUESS I WENT A TAD SHORTER THAN SHE LIKED. DIDN'T SHE READ HER STUFF AT THE BOOKSTORE THE SAME NIGHT I DID?



I DON'T THINK SHE QUITE PULLS OFF THAT FIRST PERSON, PRESENT TENSE PROSE STYLE. SHE'S IN THE SAME WRITER'S GROUP AS JULES, THE JAVA JERK AT THE CAFE ACROSS THE STREET.



WHO WANTS TO KNOW?

RELAX. A FRIEND OF MINE IS DATING HER. I JUST WANNA MAKE SURE SHE'S NOT AN AXE MURDER-ESS.



NO, SHE'S COOL. THAT'S GOOD SHE'S DATING. HER LAST GIRLFRIEND REALLY PUT HER THROUGH THE MILL.

OH REALLY?

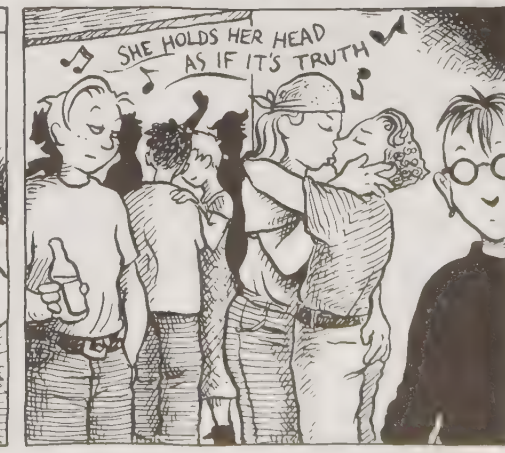
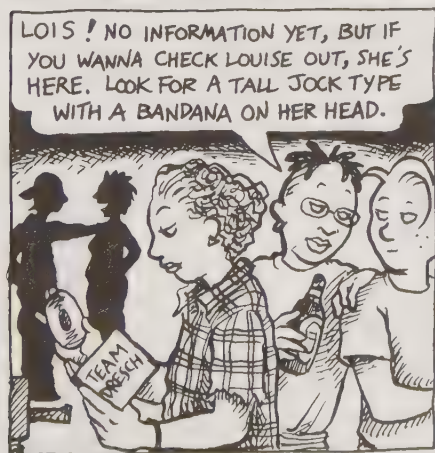


BABE, DO YOU KNOW A WOMAN NAMED LOUISE, SLINGS HASH AT THE RIGHTEOUS TURNIP?

YEAH. BIG, STRAPPING GIRL, REALLY CUTE. SHE'S ALWAYS COMING IN TO SEE ANGELA WITH SOME KIND OF SPORTS INJURY. I THINK SHE PLAYS SOCCER.



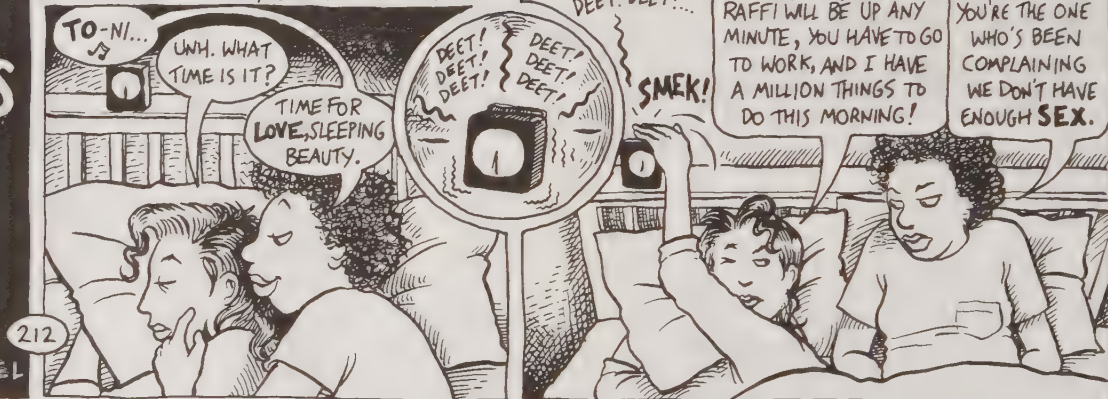




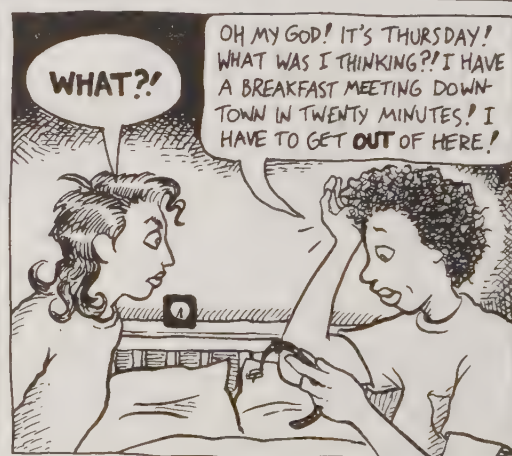
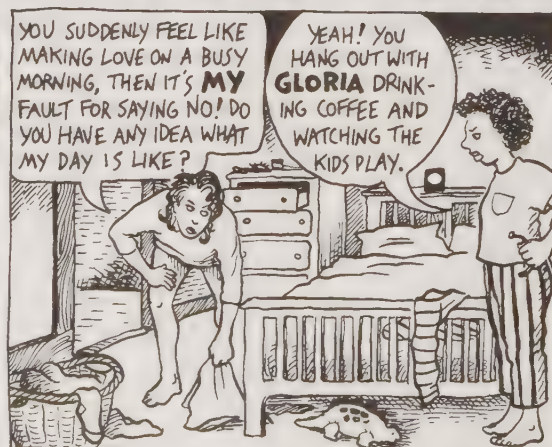
# business as usual

©1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL

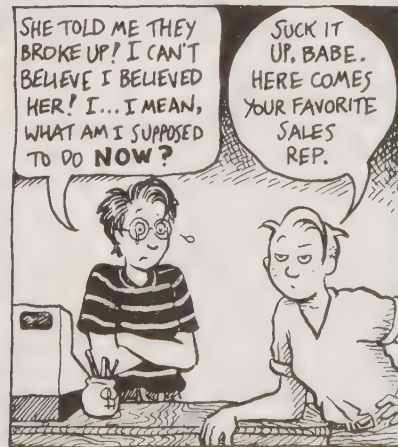
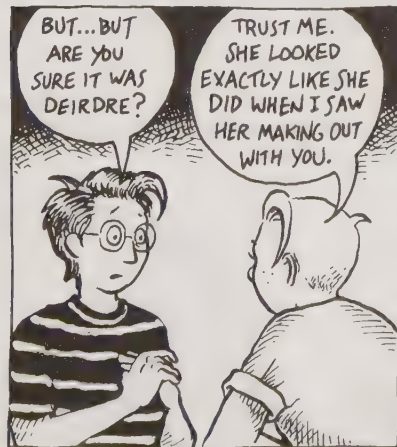
BRIGHT AND EARLY ONE SPRING DAY...

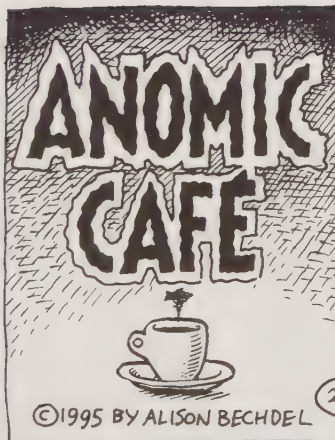


212



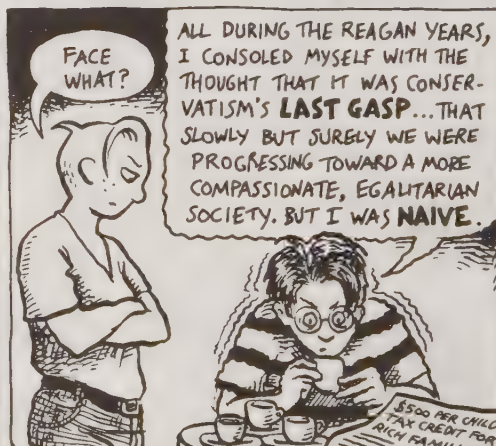
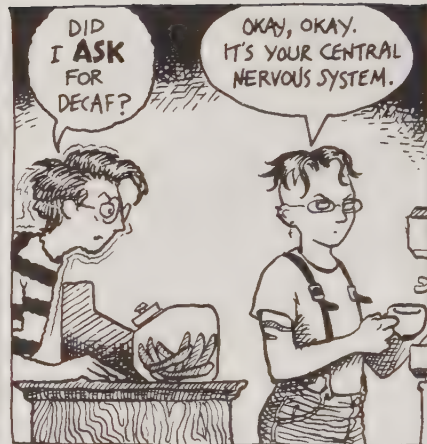




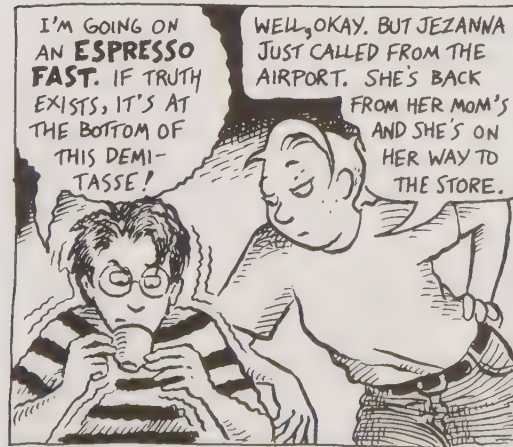
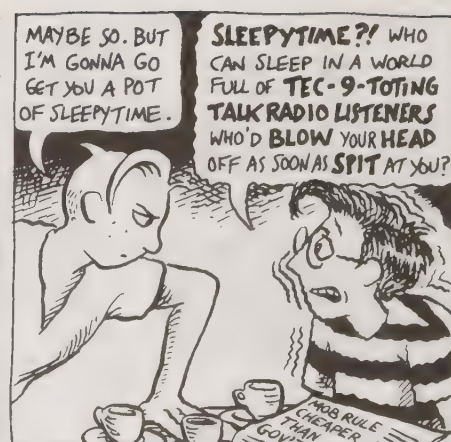
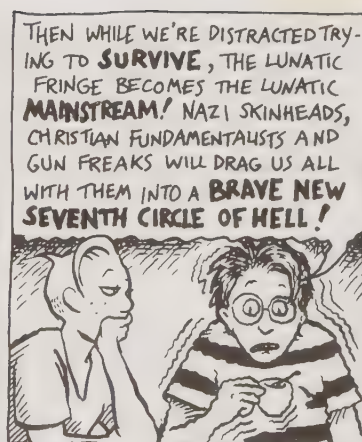
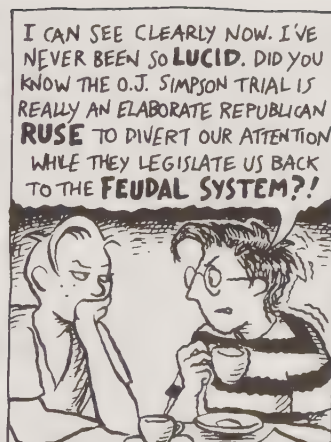
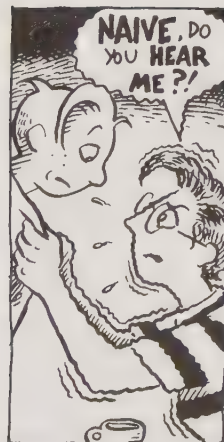


OUR HEROINE HAS BEEN SWIGGING A PUNGENT BLEND OF MOCHA JAVA AND WELTSCHMERZ, TOPPED WITH A DUSTING OF ANOMIE.

2/3







# The TANGO of ANGER

©1995 By ALISON BECHDEL

214

THE  
BOSS  
IS  
BACK.

I SEE YOU DECIDED  
TO EXPAND OUR SELEC-  
TION OF GAY MEN'S  
EROTICA WHILE I WAS  
GONE, MO.

WHAT?! WE  
DON'T HAVE A  
MEN'S EROTICA  
SECTION!

THEN WHY AM  
I LOOKING AT A  
BOX FULL OF VERY  
EXPENSIVE GYM  
QUEENS?

OH! I MADE A MISTAKE  
ON AN ORDER... I KEEP  
MEANING TO SEND THOSE  
BACK, BUT WE DON'T HAVE  
ANY PACKING TAPE.



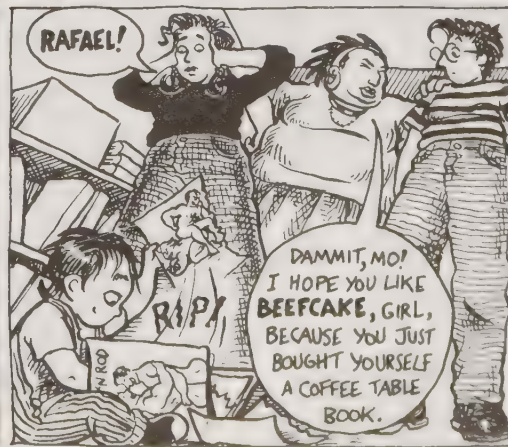
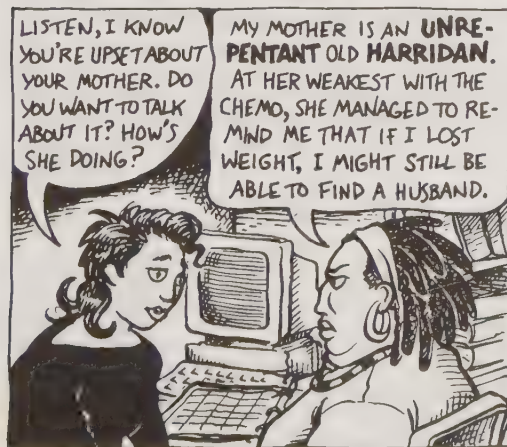
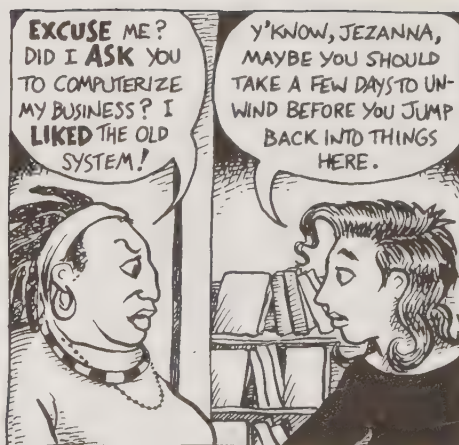
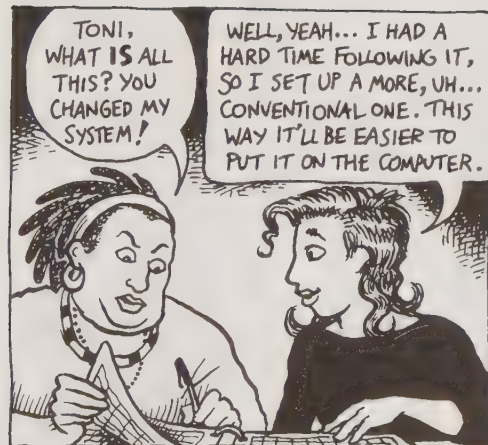
AND WHAT ARE ALL THESE  
**RUGRATS** DOING HERE?  
ARE WE  
OFFERING  
**DAYCARE**  
NOW?

NO, TONI AND HER FRIEND  
GLORIA BRING THEIR KIDS  
OVER WHILE TONI DOES  
THE PAYROLL. STELLA  
JUST STARTED  
WALKING.

SORRY, JEZ. THEY'RE  
A LITTLE WOUND UP.  
ARE YOU READY TO GO  
OVER THE BOOKS?

OKAY, LET'S  
SEE HOW YOU  
MANAGED.

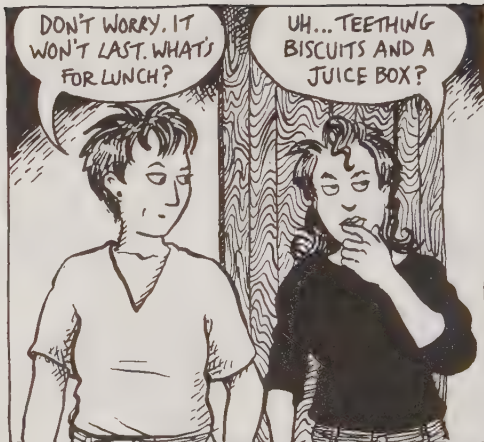
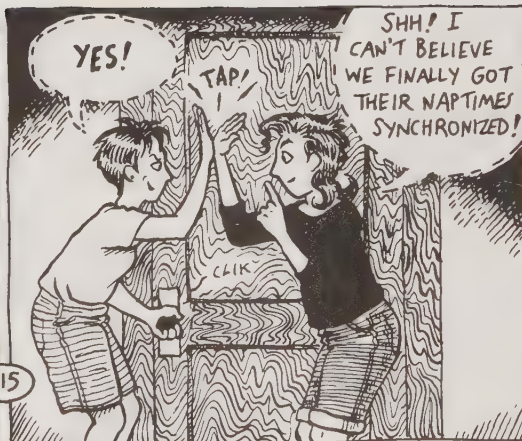




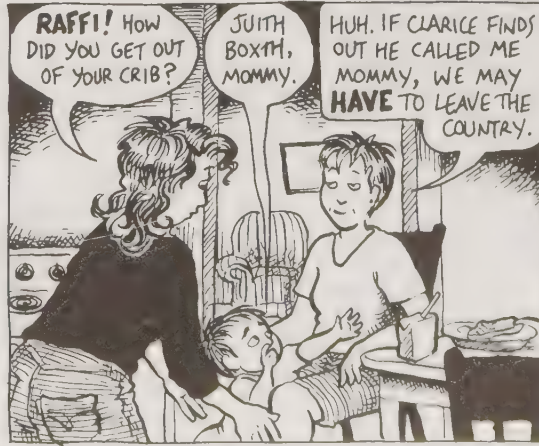
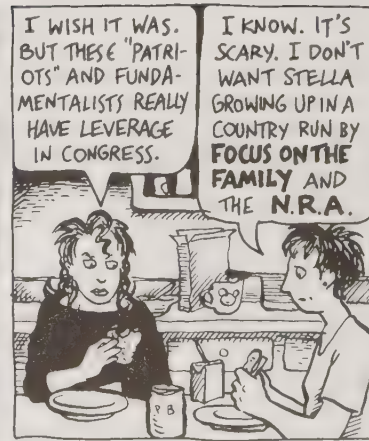
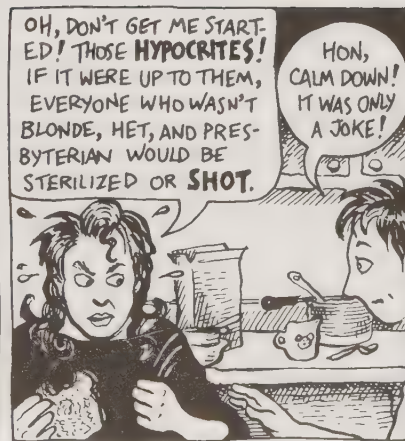
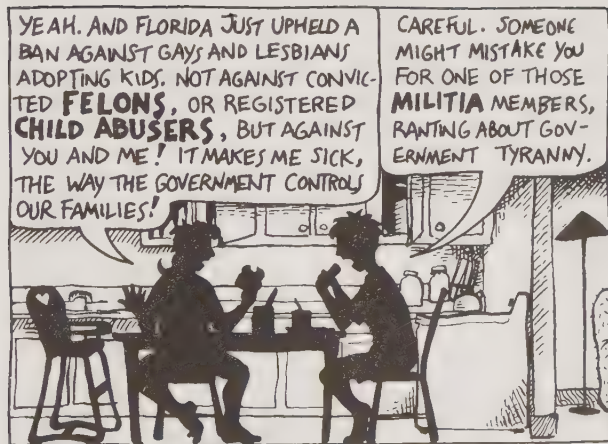
# INTENTIONAL FAMILY VALUES

©1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL

215







# their brilliant careers

216

©1995 BY ALYSON BECHDEL

GINGER! GET YOUR NOSE OUTTA THAT BOOK! I'M TAKING YOU TO DINNER!



LOIS! GET DRESSED! WE'RE GOING TO LA LENTILLE D'OR AND I'M TREATING! I GOT THE JOB!



WAY TO GO, GIRL!

HURRY UP AND GET READY! JUNE'S GONNA MEET US THERE. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? I'M THE SHELTER DIRECTOR!



CONGRATULATIONS! SO HOW'S IT FEEL TO BE AN ADMINISTRATOR?



SHE'S PROBABLY GONNA START MAKING US FILL OUT REQUISITIONS WHEN WE NEED TO BORROW A TAMPON.



YOU MUST BE GETTING A HEFTY RAISE IF YOU CAN AFFORD THE LENTILLE D'OR.



CAN I GET THE PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS FLAMBE AND THE SMOKED ATLANTIC SEAWEED?





OVER THE DESSERT COURSE...

SO GINGER, HOW'S THE DISSERTATION COMING?

FAST AND FURIOUS. YOU KNOW HOW I'VE BEEN DODGING MY ADVISER FOR, LIKE, FIVE YEARS BECAUSE I NEVER HAD ANYTHING TO SHOW HER?

la lentille d'or

YEAH.

WELL, YESTERDAY I SAW HER DUCK BEHIND A TREE AS I CROSSED THE CAMPUS. SHE HASN'T READ THE TWO FIFTY-PAGE CHAPTERS I DUMPED ON HER DESK LAST MONTH.

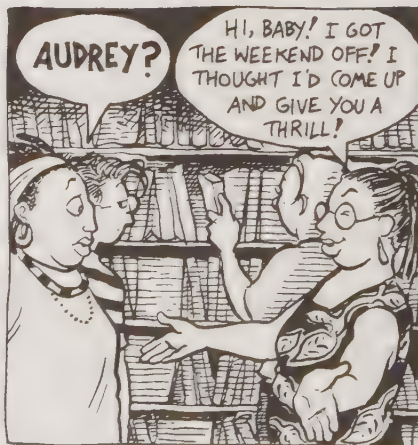
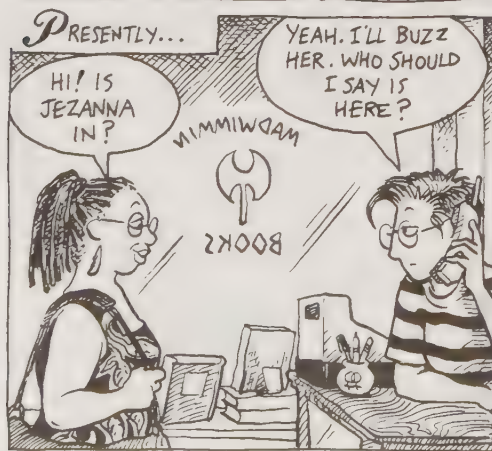
LOIS, WHAT'S WRONG? YOU HAVEN'T TOUCHED YOUR POMEGRANATE-YAM TART!

I DUNNO. I'M JUST THINKING. YOU GUYS ARE REALLY GOING SOMEWHERE WITH YOUR LIVES, AND I'M HAPPY FOR YOU. BUT WHAT ABOUT ME? I'M DOING THE SAME OLD THING I'VE ALWAYS DONE! I'M IN A RUT!



an  
*entrance*  
and an  
**exit**

©1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL





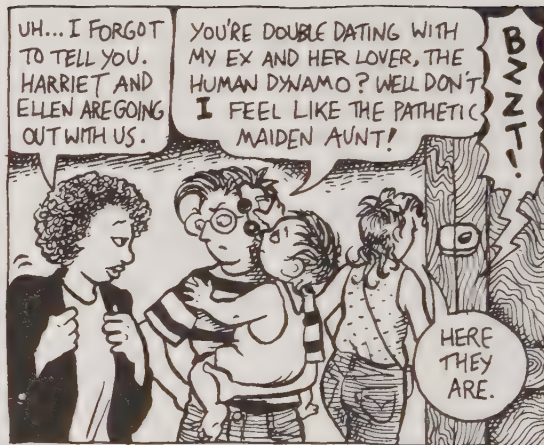
MEANWHILE...



# another Saturday night

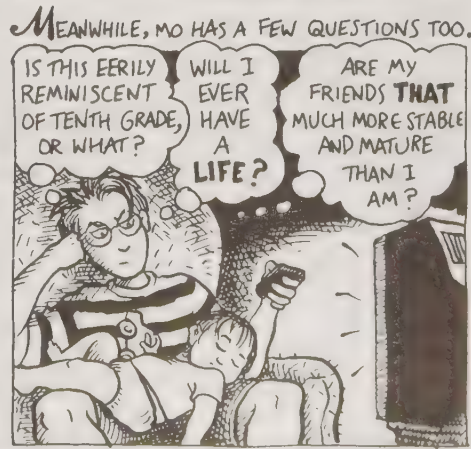
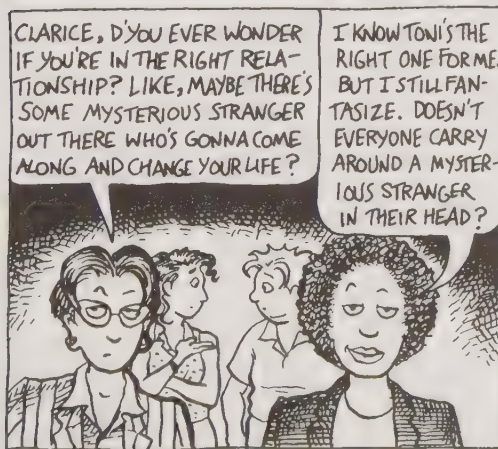
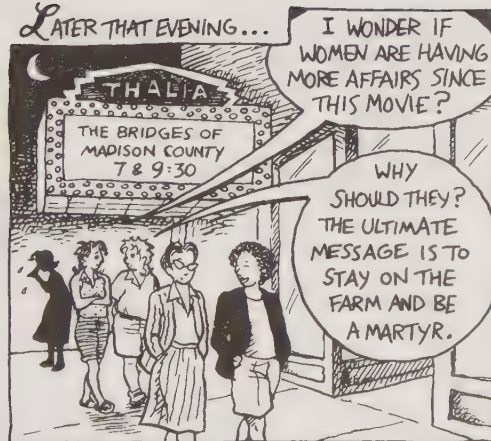
©1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL

218





LATER THAT EVENING...



# the power of speech

219

©1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL

AFTER A MOST INTERESTING DOUBLE DATE, OUR DOTING COUPLES FIND THEMSELVES ALONE AT LAST.

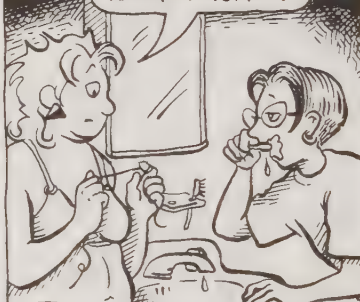
I JUST CAN'T GET OVER WHAT TONI TOLD ME TONIGHT!



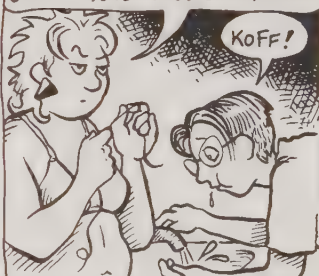
WHAT DID YOU AND ELLEN TALK ABOUT ON THE WAY TO THE CAR?



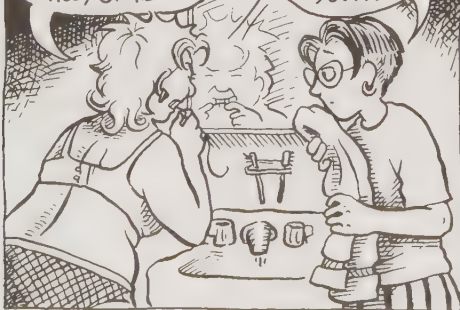
IT'S SO WEIRD TO THINK OF HER BEING ATTRACTED TO SOMEONE ELSE. I MEAN, IN FOURTEEN YEARS WITH CLARICE SHE'S NEVER EVEN **NOTICED** ANOTHER WOMAN!



I HOPE SHE DOESN'T DO ANYTHING STUPID! I'VE SEEN SO MANY DYKES LEAVE GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WHEN THINGS GOT TOUGH, JUST TO CHASE SOME MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.



THEY ALWAYS THINK THE NEW BABE IS THE "RIGHT" ONE, AS IF THEY'VE FOUND THE HOLY GRAIL.



UM...HARRIET? THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TELL YOU...

ELLEN'S HAVING AN **AFFAIR**?! CLARICE, HOW COULD YOU WAIT AN HOUR TO TELL ME **THAT**? WHO WITH?!

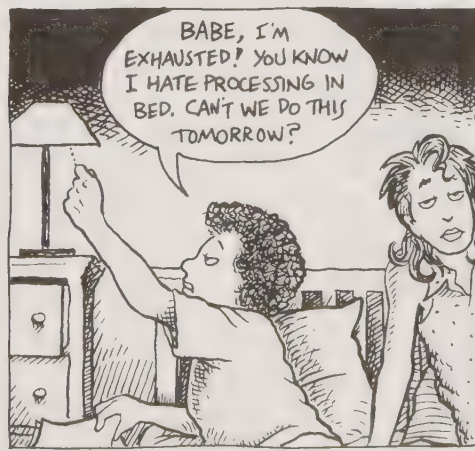
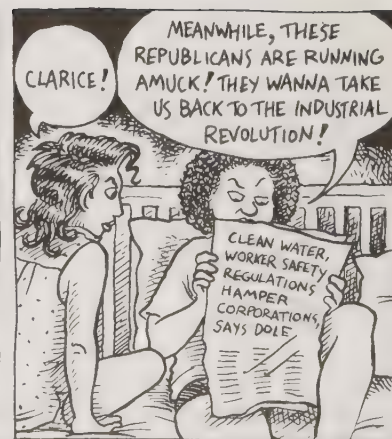
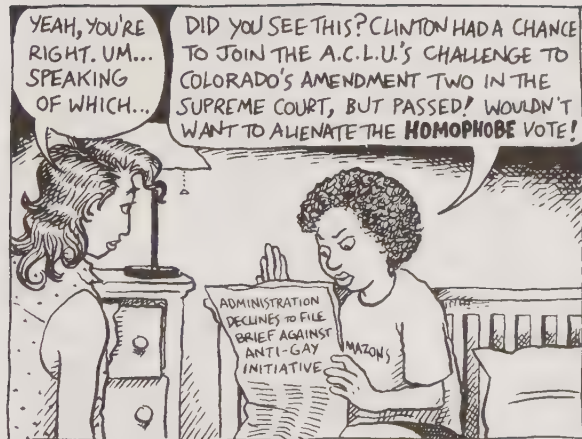


ONE OF THE WOMEN SHE'S GOING TO THE BEIJING CONFERENCE WITH. ALL THOSE PASSIONATE POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS, I GUESS.

DOES HARRIET KNOW? **NO!** CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? I MEAN, IF YOU'RE GONNA KEEP A SECRET FROM YOUR PARTNER, AT **LEAST** HAVE THE DECENCY NOT TO DRAG YOUR FRIENDS INTO IT!

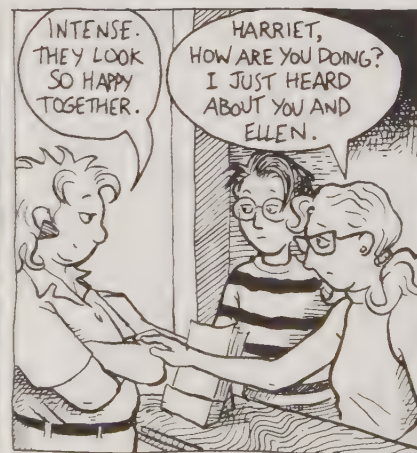
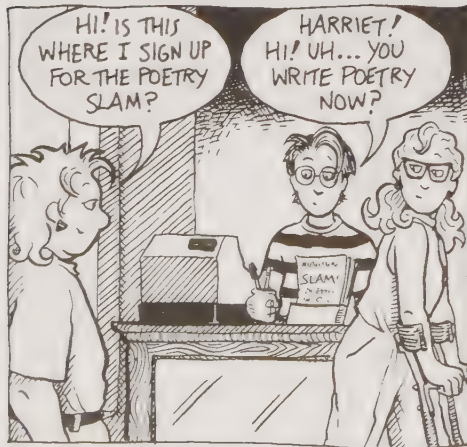
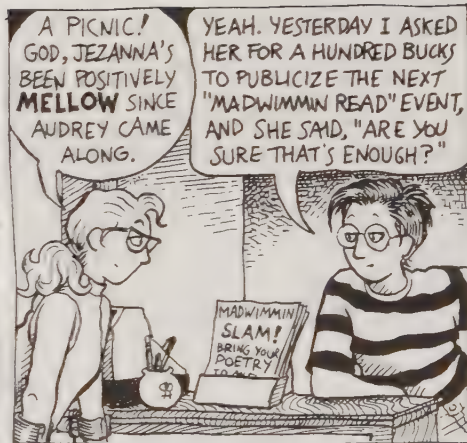
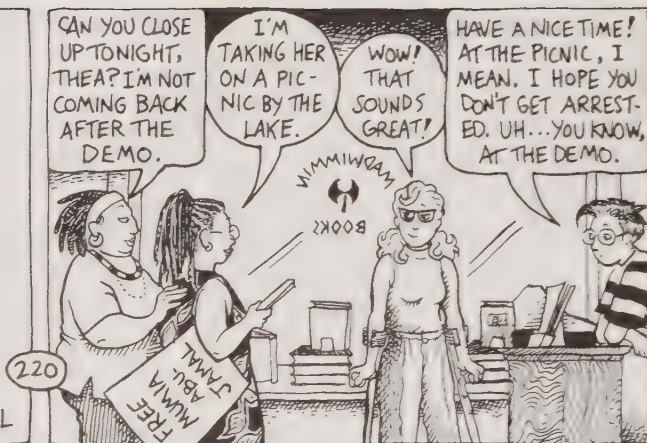




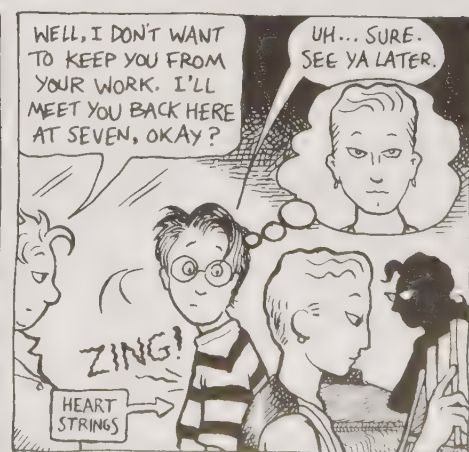
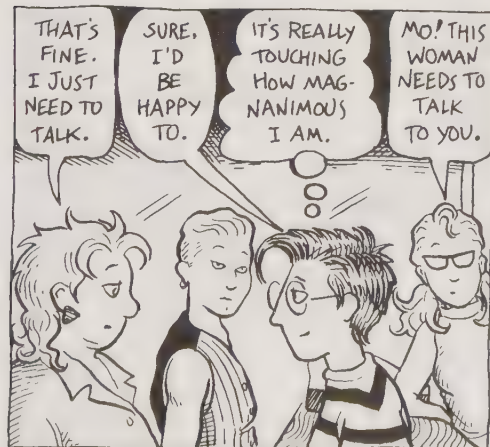
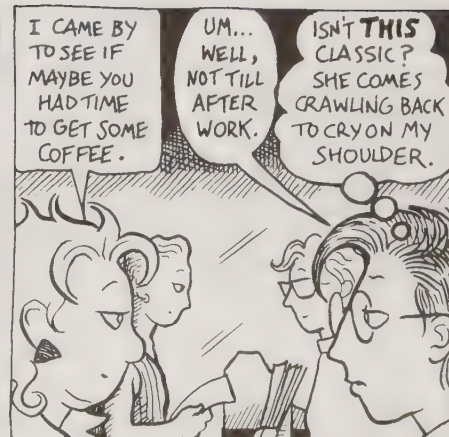


# fallin' in and out of love

©1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL







# WOMEN ON THE VERGE

© 1995 BY ALISON BECHDEL

WHILE RAFAEL AND STELLA RECHARGE ...

TONI, D'YOU MIND IF I TURN THE RINGER OFF ON YOUR PHONE? SOMETIMES IT WAKES STELLA.

NO, GO AHEAD. IF ANYONE CALLS, WE'LL HEAR THEM WHEN THE MACHINE PICKS UP.

221



SO. HAVE YOU HAD THE BIG COMING OUT TALK WITH YOUR FOLKS YET?

NO. I CAN'T TELL THEM WHEN CLARICE AND I ARE GETTING ALONG SO BADLY. I REALLY NEED HER TO BE THERE FOR ME WHEN THEY FLIP OUT.



WHY DO YOU THINK YOU TWO ARE HAVING SUCH A HARD TIME?

OH, I DON'T KNOW, GLORIA. MAYBE SHE FEELS JEALOUS OF HAVING TO SHARE ME WITH RAFFI...

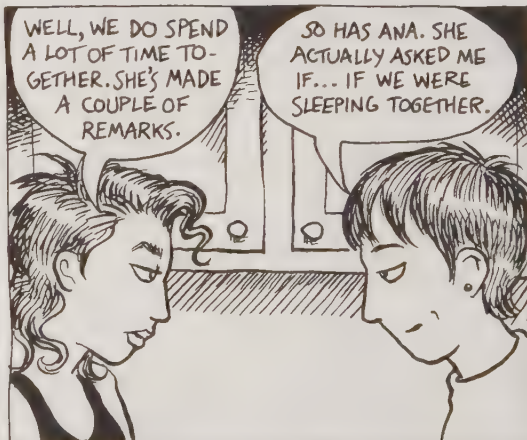
... OR MAYBE SHE'S JEALOUS OF YOU.

ME?



WELL, WE DO SPEND A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER. SHE'S MADE A COUPLE OF REMARKS.

SO HAS ANA. SHE ACTUALLY ASKED ME IF... IF WE WERE SLEEPING TOGETHER.

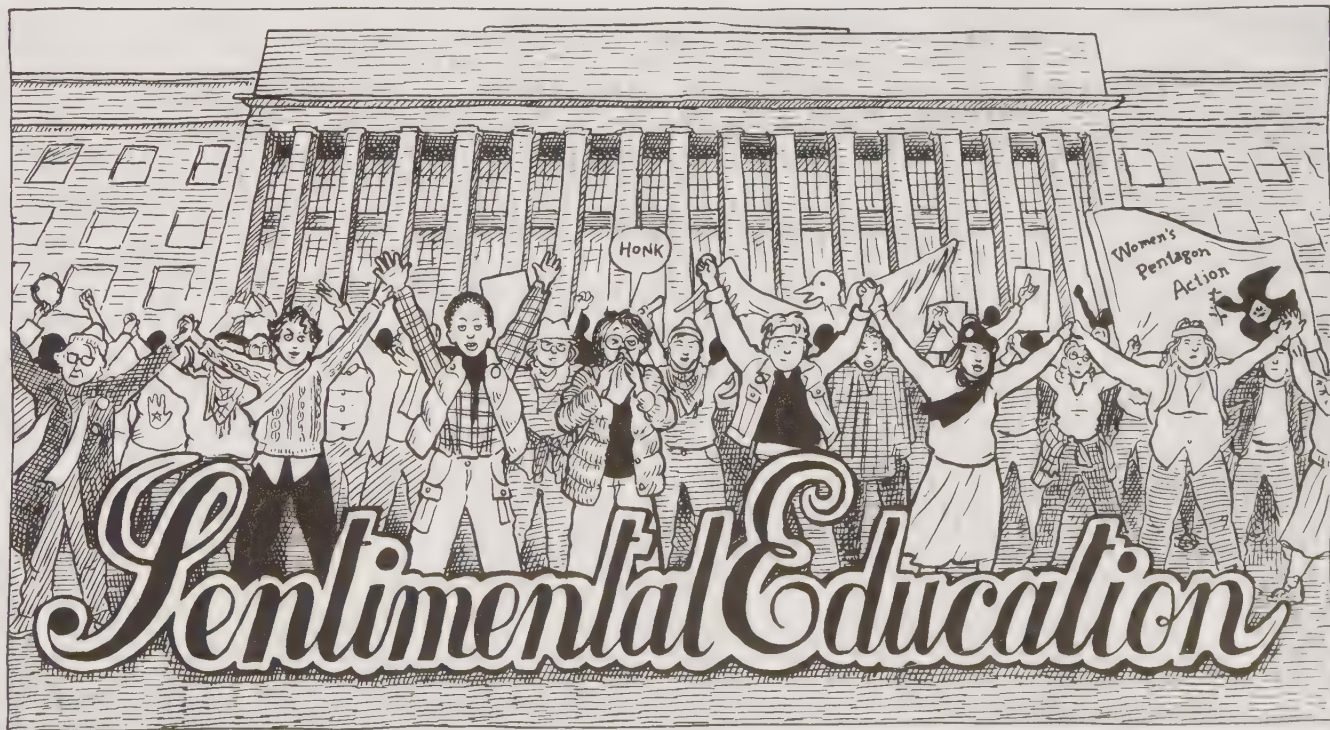


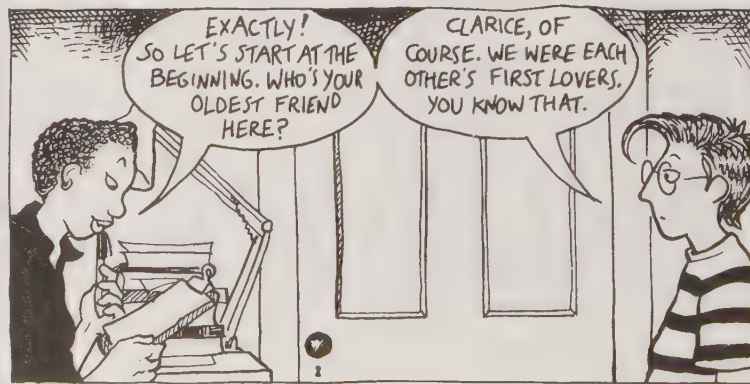




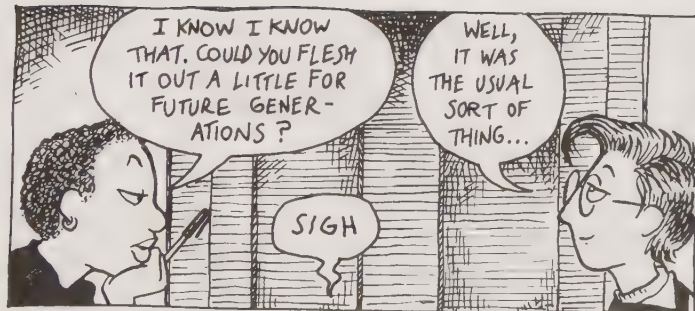








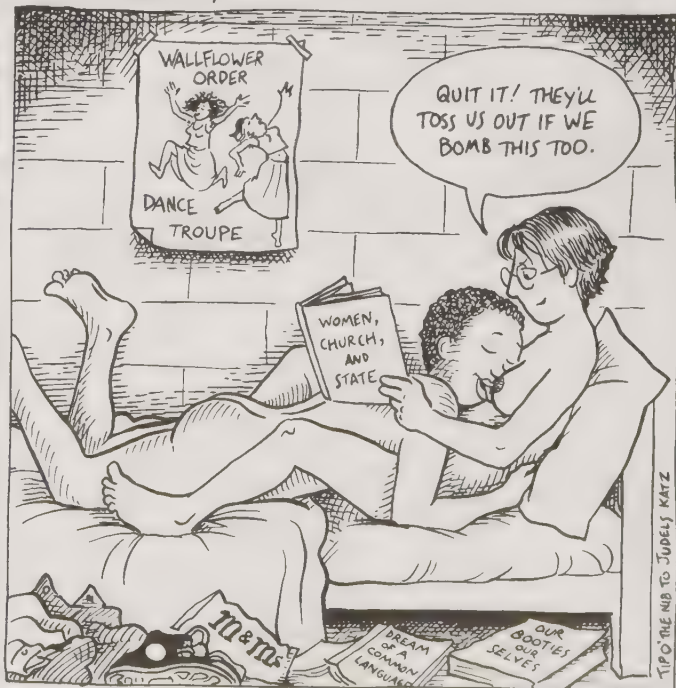




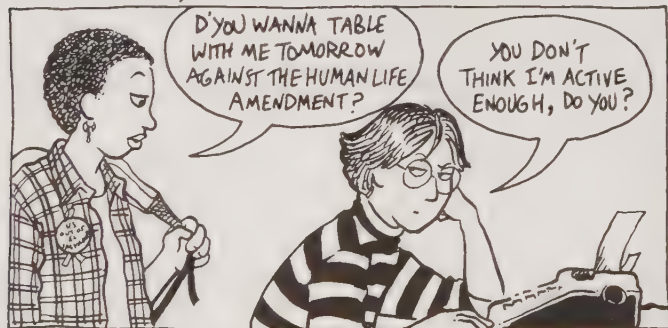
WE MET IN A WOMEN'S STUDIES CLASS. THEN ONE NIGHT, AFTER GOING TO A CAMPUS DISCUSSION GROUP CALLED "EXPLORING OUR LESBIAN SIDE," WE DID.



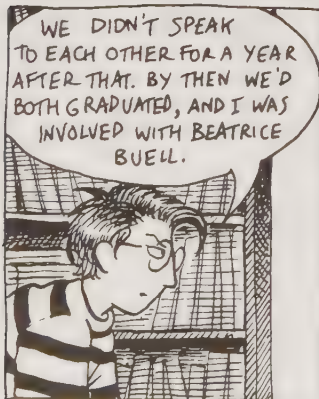
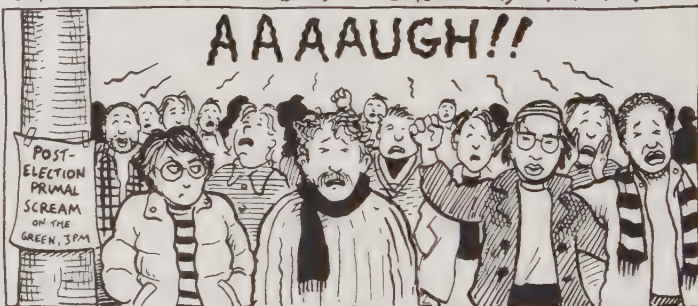
WE HAD ONE REALLY NICE SEMESTER TOGETHER, AND BLEW OFF ALL OUR CLASSES EXCEPT "DIALECTICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE SECOND SEX."



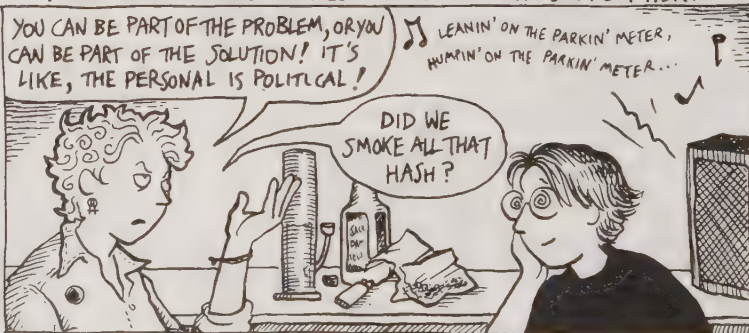
BUT EVENTUALLY, SHE STARTED TO CRITICIZE ME ALL THE TIME.



I DIDN'T VOTE IN THE 1980 ELECTION, AND THE NEXT DAY SHE LEFT ME FOR TANYA. LIKE AS IF REAGAN WAS MY FAULT!



YEAH, WELL. THAT WAS **AFTER** SHE WENT INTO RECOVERY. WHEN I WAS WITH HER, SHE WAS STILL A BIG POLITICO. I LEARNED A **LOT** FROM HER.





ANYHOW, BEATRICE WAS WORKING ON THE SECOND WOMEN'S PENTAGON ACTION THAT FALL. I WAS SO INTIMIDATED BY HER ACTIVIST PALS.



OL' BEA HAD A SURPRISE FOR ME AS WE BOARDED THE BUS TO WASHINGTON.



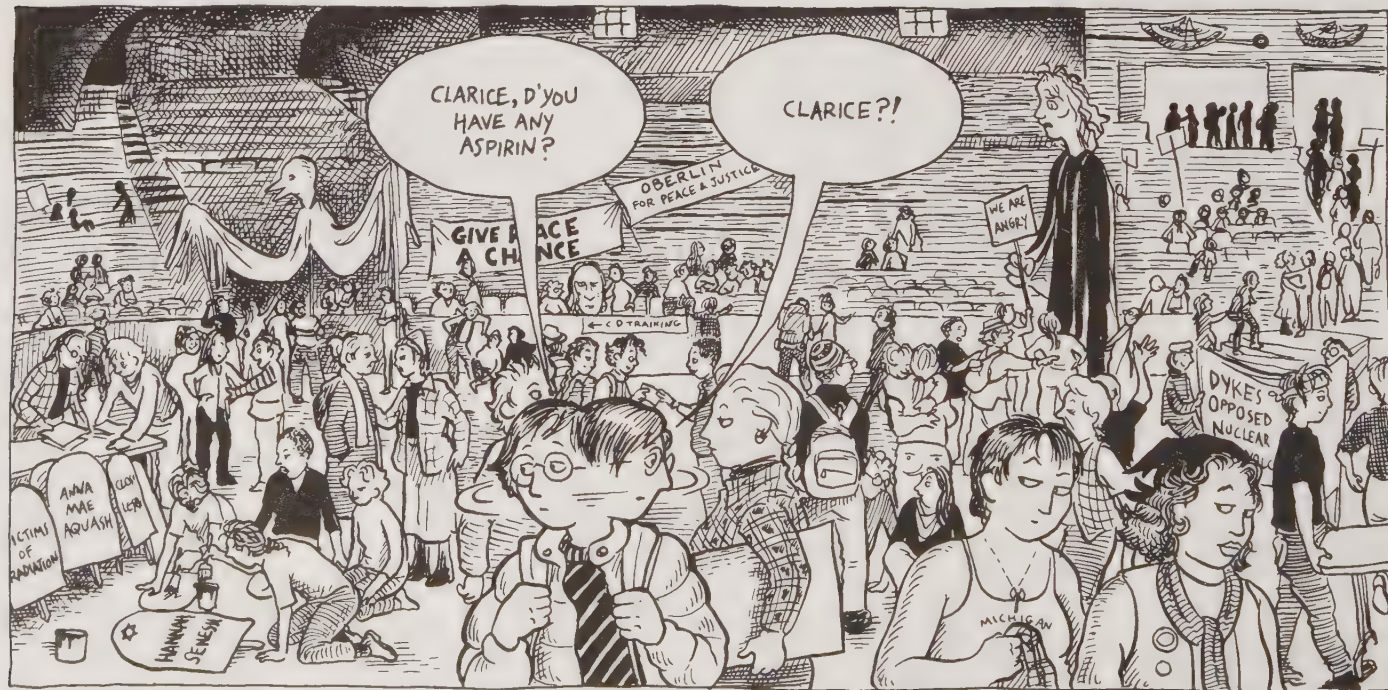
GOD! I WOULDN'T BE TWENTY-ONE AGAIN FOR ANYTHING! WHY DO PEOPLE ROMANTICIZE THEIR YOUTH? I WAS STONED AND CONFUSED AND INSECURE AND IN A BAD RELATIONSHIP! WHAT A MISERABLE TIME OF MY LIFE!



LUCKILY, CLARICE'S GIRLFRIEND DITCHED HER FOR THE WEEKEND, TOO. WE SAT TOGETHER AND MADE UP.

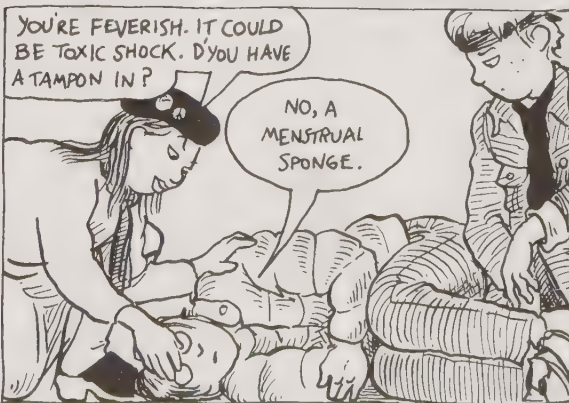


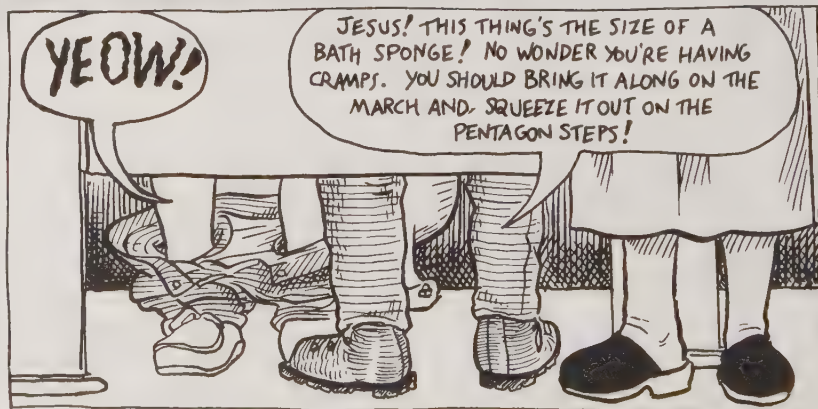
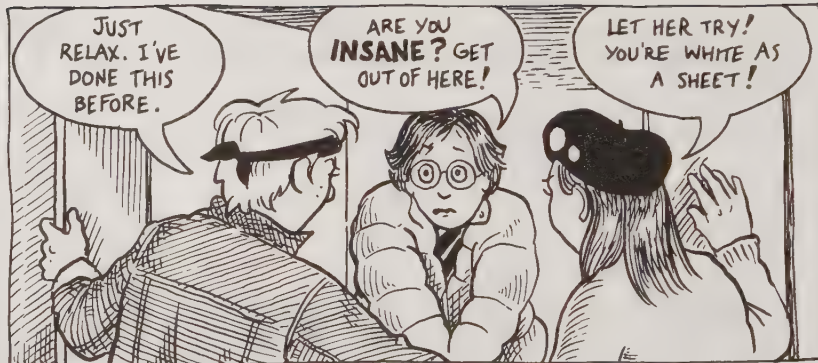
WHEN THE BUS DROPPED US AT THE WASHINGTON COLISEUM, I WAS STUNNED. THE PLACE WAS ASWARM WITH EARNEST, UNTAMED AMAZONS, AND I HAD A CRUSH ON ALL OF THEM AT ONCE. EVERYONE EXCEPT ME SEEMED TO KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON. I WAS IMMEDIATELY GRIPPED WITH EXCRUCIATING CRAMPS.



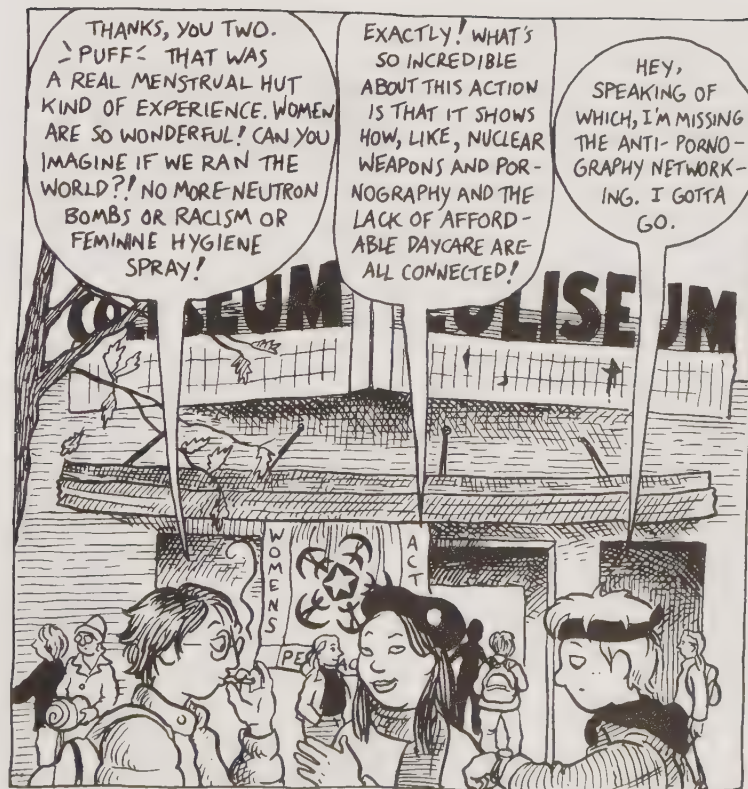


I WAS IN AGONY. I FOUND A SPOT WHERE I WOULDN'T GET TRAMPLED, AND CURLED UP ON THE FLOOR.









THE NEXT AFTERNOON...

WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO IS INTERVIEW YOU EACH SEPARATELY. IS THAT A PROBLEM?

HOW ABOUT IF I GO FIRST, BABE? I HAVE THAT MEETING OVER AT THE PROJECTS TONIGHT.

WE'RE TRYING TO GET THESE FOLKS RELOCATED. THE PLACE WAS BUILT ON A TOXIC WASTE DUMP, AND NOW THE STATE SAYS THE REASON EVERYONE'S GETTING SICK IS BECAUSE THEY SMOKE AND DRINK TOO MUCH.

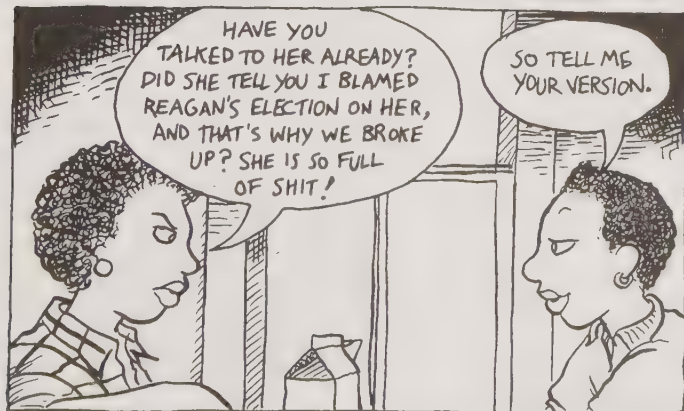
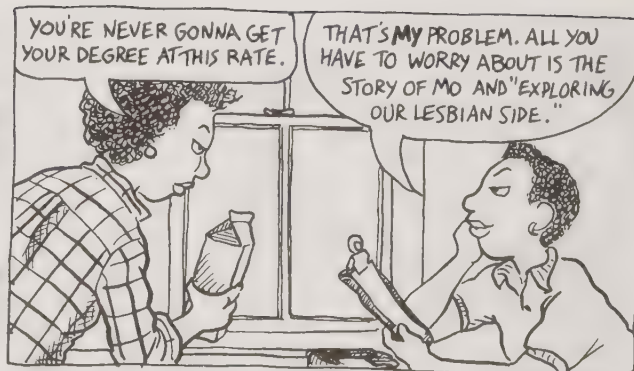
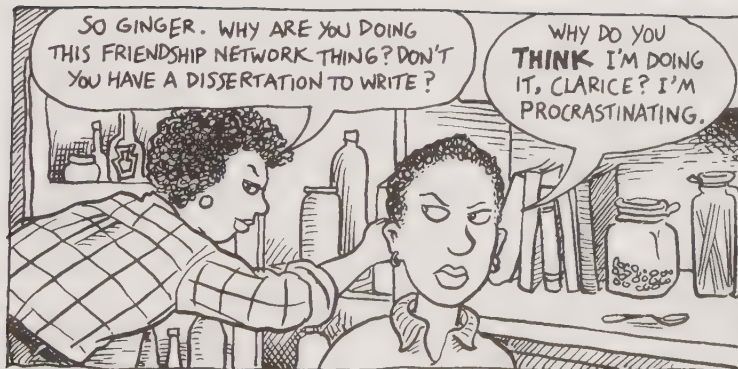
SURE, CLARICE. GO AHEAD. YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE IMPORTANT JOB. I GUESS WE'LL JUST GO TO THE CO-OP, RETURN THE LIBRARY BOOKS, REGISTER FOR BABY AQUATICS, GAS UP THE CAR, DROP YOUR SHIRTS AT THE LAUNDRY, AND SWING BY THE DRUGSTORE FOR YOUR ALLERGY PILLS.



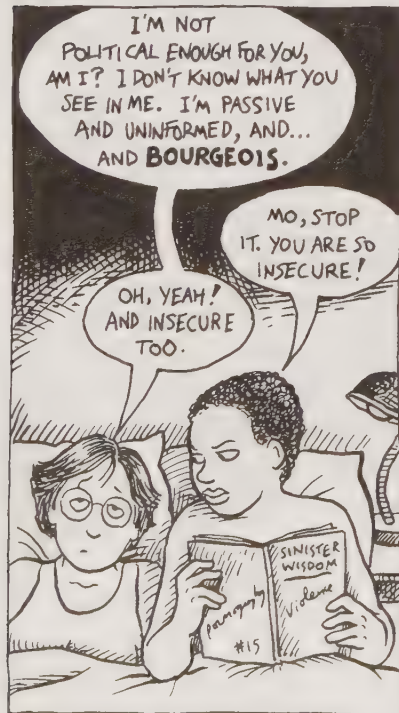
I AM NOTHING WITHOUT YOU.

REMEMBER, NO STARCH.

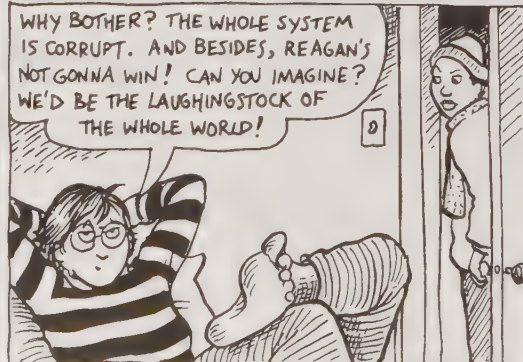
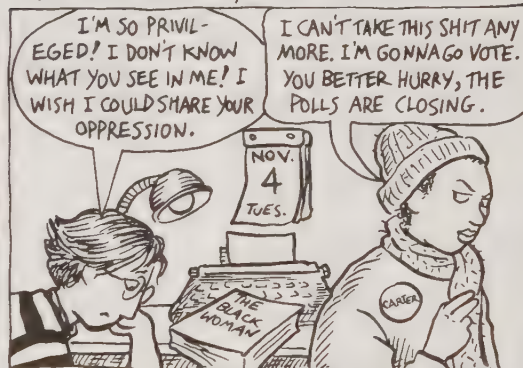




BUT AFTER THE GLOW FADED, SHE STARTED DRIVING ME NUTS.



THE WHITE GUILT FINALLY PUSHED ME OVER THE EDGE.



SO I LEFT HER FOR TANYA. OUT OF THE FRYING PAN, INTO THE FIRE.





I SOMEHOW STAYED WITH HER FOR A YEAR. TILL AROUND THE TIME OF THE SECOND WOMEN'S PENTAGON ACTION. I REMEMBER THE BUS RIDE THERE...



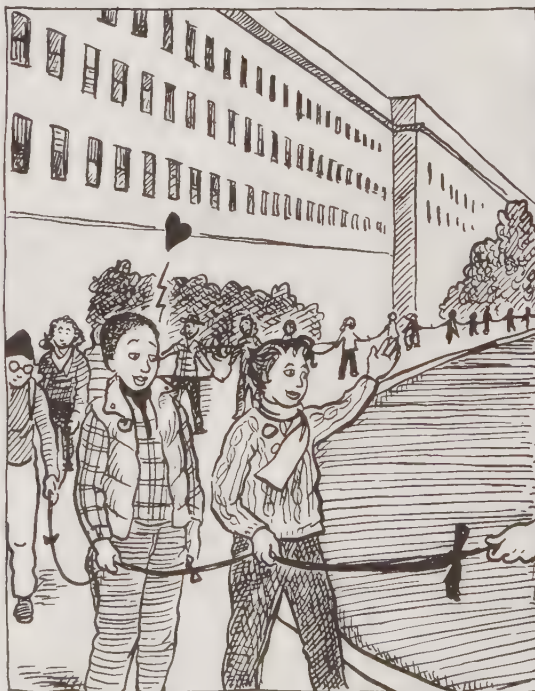
WHEN WE ARRIVED IN D.C., I GOT MY BIG BREAK...



I SPENT THE REST OF THE WEEKEND WITH TONI. TANYA DIDN'T SEEM TO NOTICE.



I COULD FEEL AN ELECTRIC CHARGE SURGING THROUGH THE FABRIC TONI AND I HELD BETWEEN US AS WE ENCIRCLED THE PENTAGON.



I FELT A LITTLE GUILTY ON THE TRIP HOME, THINKING OF TANYA IN JAIL... BUT IT PASSED.

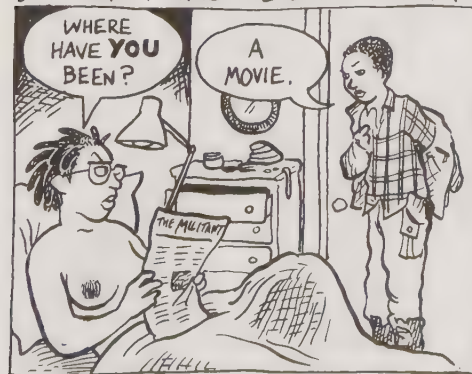




A MONTH LATER, TONI AND I HAD OUR FIRST DATE.



BUT I HADN'T BROKEN THE NEWS TO TANYA YET.





CLARICE NEVER REMEMBERS HOW WE MET! IT WASN'T ON THE BUS TO D.C., IT WAS AT A POETRY READING A MONTH EARLIER. I GUESS SHE WAS DISTRACTED BY THE FIGHT SHE WAS HAVING WITH TANYA, BUT I THOUGHT SHE WAS THE MOST GORGEOUS WOMAN I'D EVER SEEN.

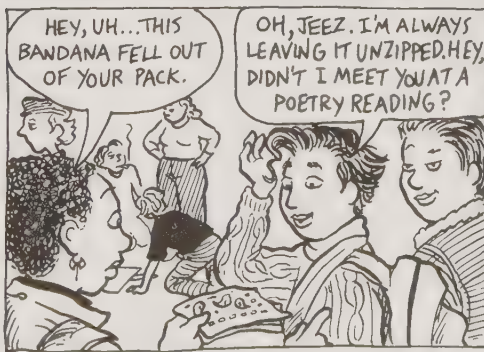


THE NEXT TIME I SAW HER WAS ON THE BUS TO THE PENTAGON ACTION. SHE DIDN'T RECOGNIZE ME, AND I WAS TOO SHY TO SAY HELLO. I WAS WITH MY FRIEND ANA. WE WERE ALWAYS HAVING THESE INTENSE THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS.

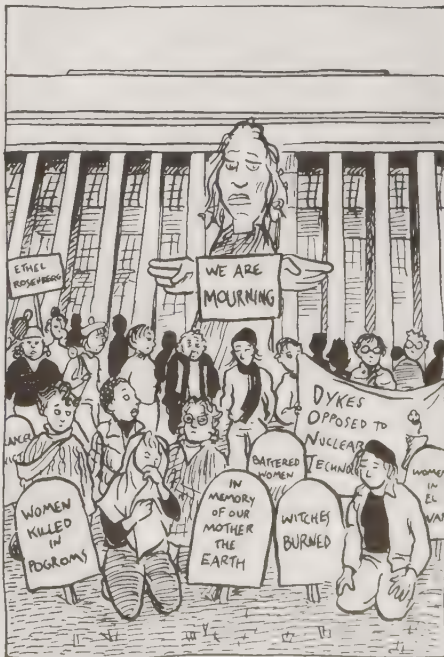




IF IT WEREN'T FOR ANA, I DON'T KNOW IF  
I EVER WOULD'VE HOOKED UP WITH CLARICE.



I'D NEVER BEEN TO AN ALL-WOMEN PROTEST BEFORE. THERE WAS A REALLY POWERFUL, HEALING ENERGY TO IT, AS IF WE ACTUALLY COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



ON THE RIDE HOME, I KNEW I WAS  
FALLING IN LOVE WITH CHARICE.







I'M GONNA PASS, LOIS. AFTER A WEEK AT THE BATTERED

WOMEN'S SHELTER, I THINK THE POST-MODERN IRONY WOULD ELUDE ME.

GREAT! THEN YOU CAN SIT BACK AND TELL ME ALL ABOUT YOUR SORDID PAST.

SUIT YOURSELF. YOU'RE GONNA MISS THE LIVE '70'S FASHION SHOW. LOTS OF VINTAGE HUK-A-POO.



SHORTLY...

LEMME SEE... I WAS IN MY SENIOR YEAR AT GEORGE WASHINGTON...



MY BOYFRIEND LIVED OFF-CAMPUS IN A KIND OF COLLECTIVE. SOME OF THE WOMEN IN HIS HOUSE REALLY INTRIGUED ME.

IS RALPH AROUND?

NO, AND IT'S HIS NIGHT TO COOK. HE'S PROBABLY FUCKING OFF OVER AT THE NO NUKES OFFICE. WANT A TAROT READING?



WHEN A BUNCH OF THEM GOT FED UP WITH THE GUYS AND MOVED INTO THEIR OWN PLACE, I MOVED WITH THEM.

COMPLEMENTARY PROTEIN LOAF. SOY GRITS, BULGHUR, AND PEANUT BUTTER.

UH... WHAT'S THAT?

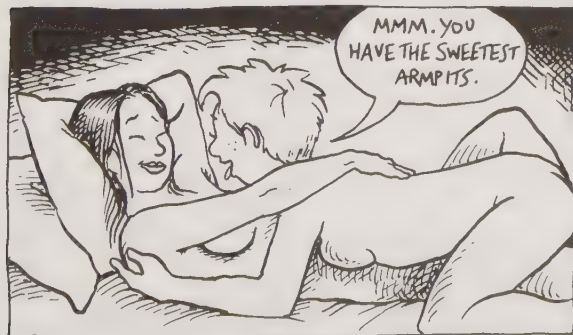




I DIDN'T THINK I WAS A LESBIAN, BUT RALPH WAS SURE STARTING TO GET ON MY NERVES.



LOIS BEGGED TO DIFFER, AND BY THE NEXT MORNING, I WAS INCLINED TO AGREE WITH HER.



THE WEEKEND OF THE PENTAGON ACTION, WE OPENED OUR HOUSE TO WOMEN WHO NEEDED A PLACE TO STAY.



I COULDN'T SEPARATE MY EXCITEMENT ABOUT LOIS FROM MY EXCITEMENT ABOUT THE ACTION. IT WAS SO INTENSE TO CONFRONT THAT MONUMENT OF DEATH AND GREED WITH ALL THOSE WOMEN.



OH! AND WE BOTH MET MO FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT WEEKEND! SHE DIDN'T SEEM QUITE AS MOVED BY IT ALL AS I WAS.



LOIS AND I STAYED IN TOUCH AFTER SHE LEFT. I WAS CONVINCED SHE WAS THE LOVE OF MY LIFE.

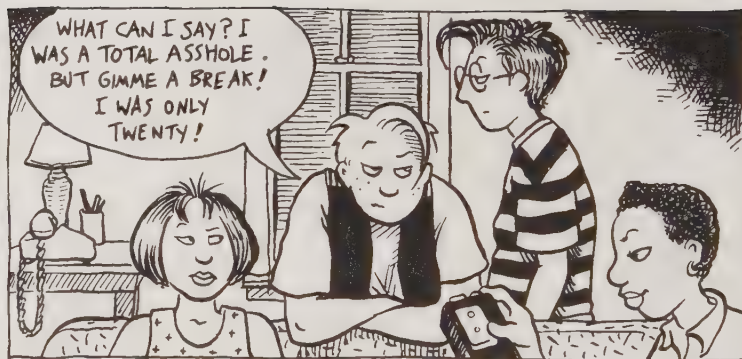
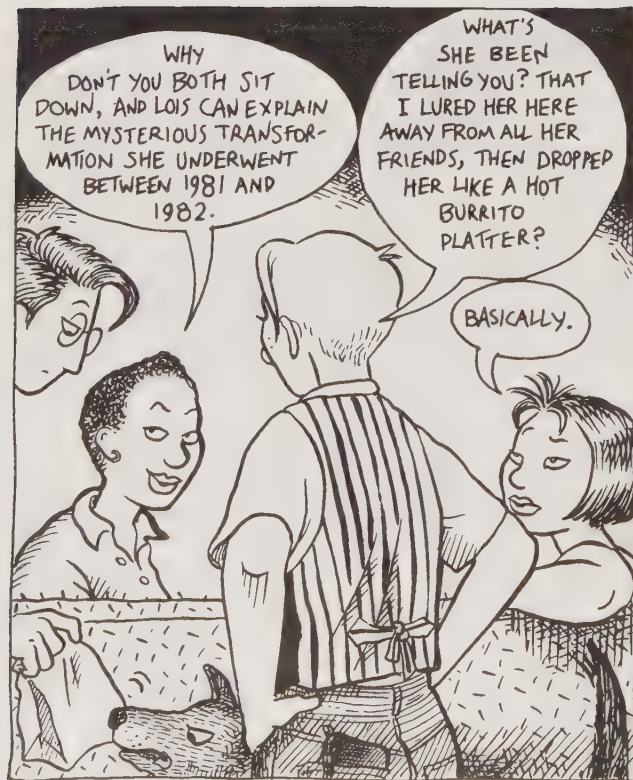


AFTER GRADUATION, I MOVED HERE TO BE WITH HER, LIKE WE'D PLANNED. BUT LOIS HAD CHANGED.









I REALLY MEANT IT WHEN I TOLD SPARROW I WAS IN LOVE WITH HER.  
THE PENTAGON ACTION WAS SUCH A BUZZ.





BUT THERE WAS SO MUCH GOING ON BACK HERE! I'D DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL BY THEN, BUT I WAS READING EVERYTHING I COULD GET MY HANDS ON.



I'D BEEN REALLY ACTIVE WITH FURIOUS WOMEN AVENGING PORNOGRAPHY FOR THE PAST YEAR...

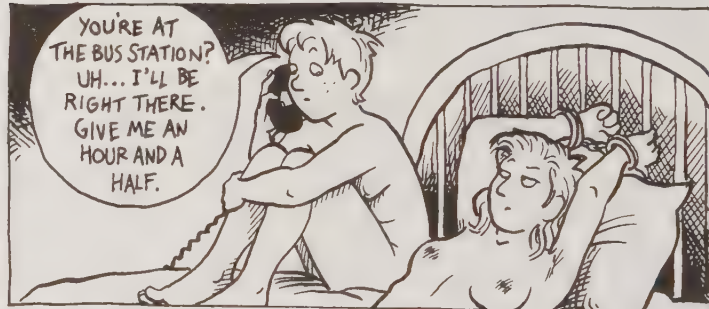


BUT SUDDENLY, I WAS REALLY CONFUSED.



ADMITTING SOME OF THE THINGS THAT TURNED ME ON WAS LIKE COMING OUT ALL OVER AGAIN.

BY THE TIME SPARROW ARRIVED, I WAS HAVING WAY TOO MUCH FUN TO SETTLE DOWN.



AND IT SOON BECAME CLEAR THAT WE WERE WILDLY INCOMPATIBLE ANYWAY...





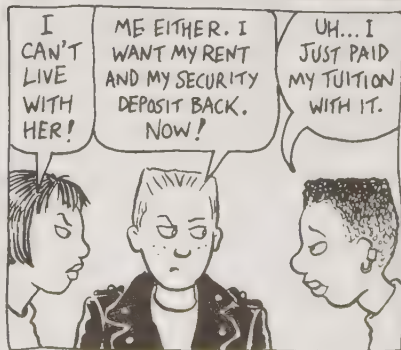
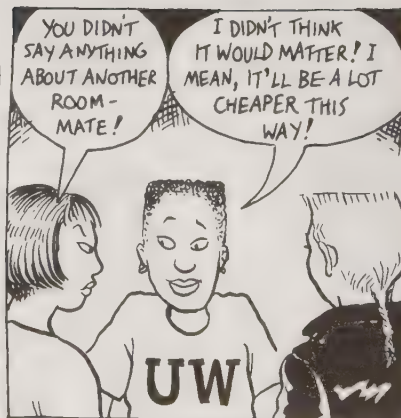
I'D JUST BROKEN UP WITH... WHO WAS IT? BETSY,  
I GUESS. THIS PLACE SOUNDED PERFECT.

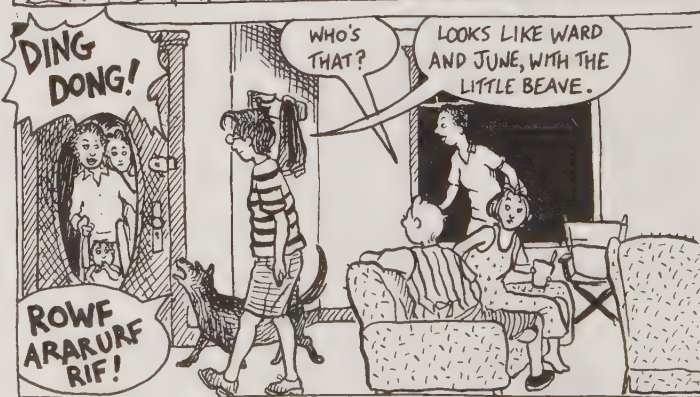
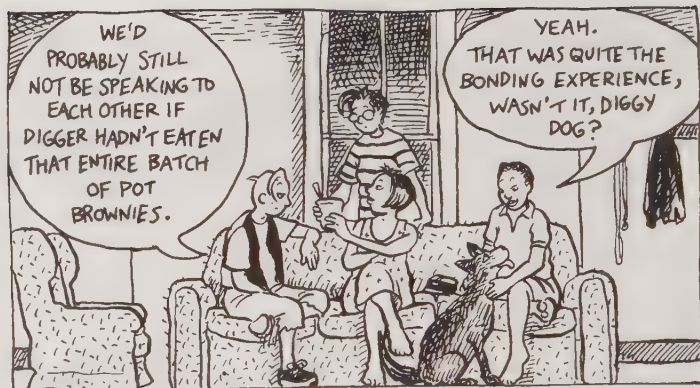
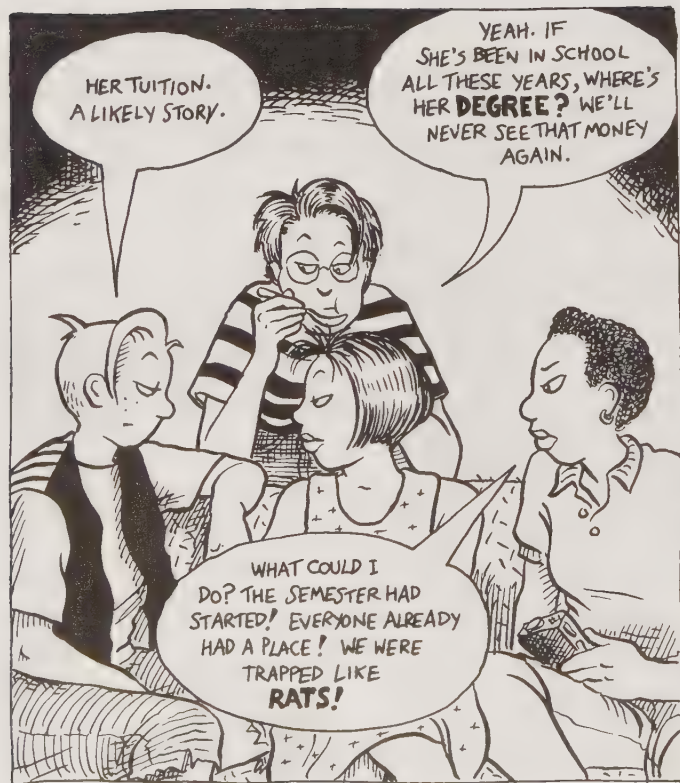


AND THE WOMAN WAS SO NICE!



BUT ON MOVING DAY...

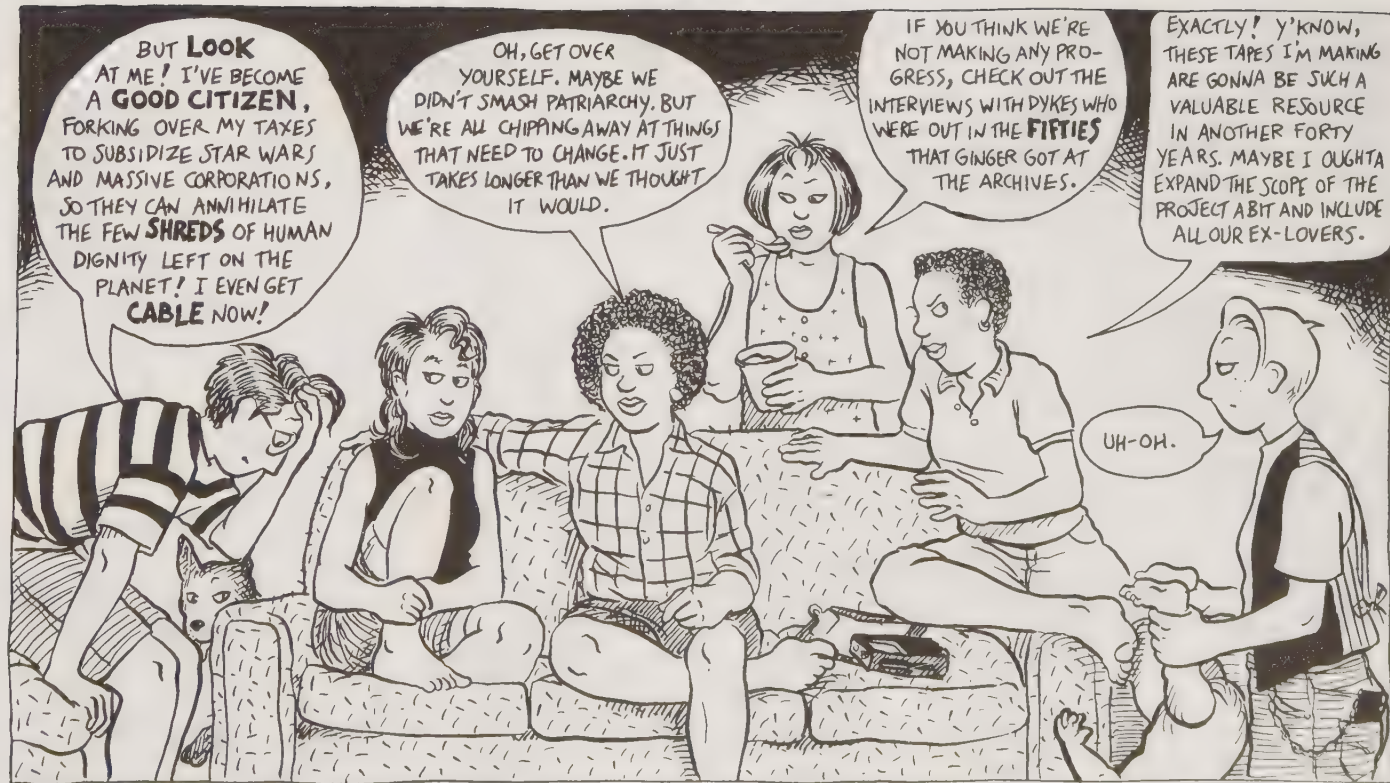












BUT LOOK  
AT ME! I'VE BECOME  
A **GOOD CITIZEN**,  
FORKING OVER MY TAXES  
TO SUBSIDIZE STAR WARS  
AND MASSIVE CORPORATIONS,  
SO THEY CAN ANNIHILATE  
THE FEW **SHREDS** OF HUMAN  
DIGNITY LEFT ON THE  
PLANET! I EVEN GET  
**CABLE** NOW!

OH, GET OVER  
YOURSELF. MAYBE WE  
DIDN'T SMASH PATRIARCHY. BUT  
WE'RE ALL CHIPPING AWAY AT THINGS  
THAT NEED TO CHANGE. IT JUST  
TAKES LONGER THAN WE THOUGHT  
IT WOULD.

IF YOU THINK WE'RE  
NOT MAKING ANY PRO-  
GRESS, CHECK OUT THE  
INTERVIEWS WITH DYKES WHO  
WERE OUT IN THE **FIFTIES**  
THAT GINGER GOT AT  
THE ARCHIVES.

EXACTLY! Y'KNOW,  
THESE TAPES I'M MAKING  
ARE GONNA BE SUCH A  
VALUABLE RESOURCE  
IN ANOTHER FORTY  
YEARS. MAYBE I OUGHTA  
EXPAND THE SCOPE OF THE  
PROJECT A BIT AND INCLUDE  
ALL OUR EX-LOVERS.

UH-OH.



...AND MAYBE INSTEAD OF FINISHING MY DOCTORATE IN ENGLISH, I'LL GO BACK AND GET ANOTHER PH.D. IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY! I'M ALREADY DOING THE DISSERTATION RESEARCH! "LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY LESBIAN KINSHIP STRUCTURES: AN EXPERIENTIAL PERSPECTIVE ON MODES OF COMMUNITY." WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I  
THINK I'M  
MOVING  
OUT.

ME TOO.  
AND I WANT  
MY SECURITY  
DEPOSIT BACK  
BEFORE YOU PAY  
ANY TUITION.





**Firebrand Books is an award-winning feminist and lesbian publishing house celebrating its tenth anniversary year. We are committed to producing quality work in a wide variety of genres by ethnically and racially diverse authors.**

**A free catalog is available on request from Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, New York 14850, (607) 272-0000.**





\$10.95

**U**nnatural Dykes To Watch Out For is Alison Bechdel's sixth sordid collection, her candid cartoon exposé of contemporary lesbian life. She gives us a complete and unexpurgated look at the women—our heroines—who have “strayed beyond the bounds of decent society.”

While the book's lurid cover suggests who some of our crowd—Clarice, Lois, Mo, and Toni—might have been if they had appeared in the lesbian pulps of the 1950s, we can read the true story of their lives—when they were young some fifteen years ago—in a novella created especially for this book.

Alison Bechdel continues to cross over the line into the forbidden worlds that keep us reading.



MARTHA TORMEY

ISBN 1-56341-067-2



90000>

9 781563 410673

ISBN 1-56341-067-2 paper  
ISBN 1-56341-068-0 cloth



**Firebrand  
Books**  
Ithaca, New York